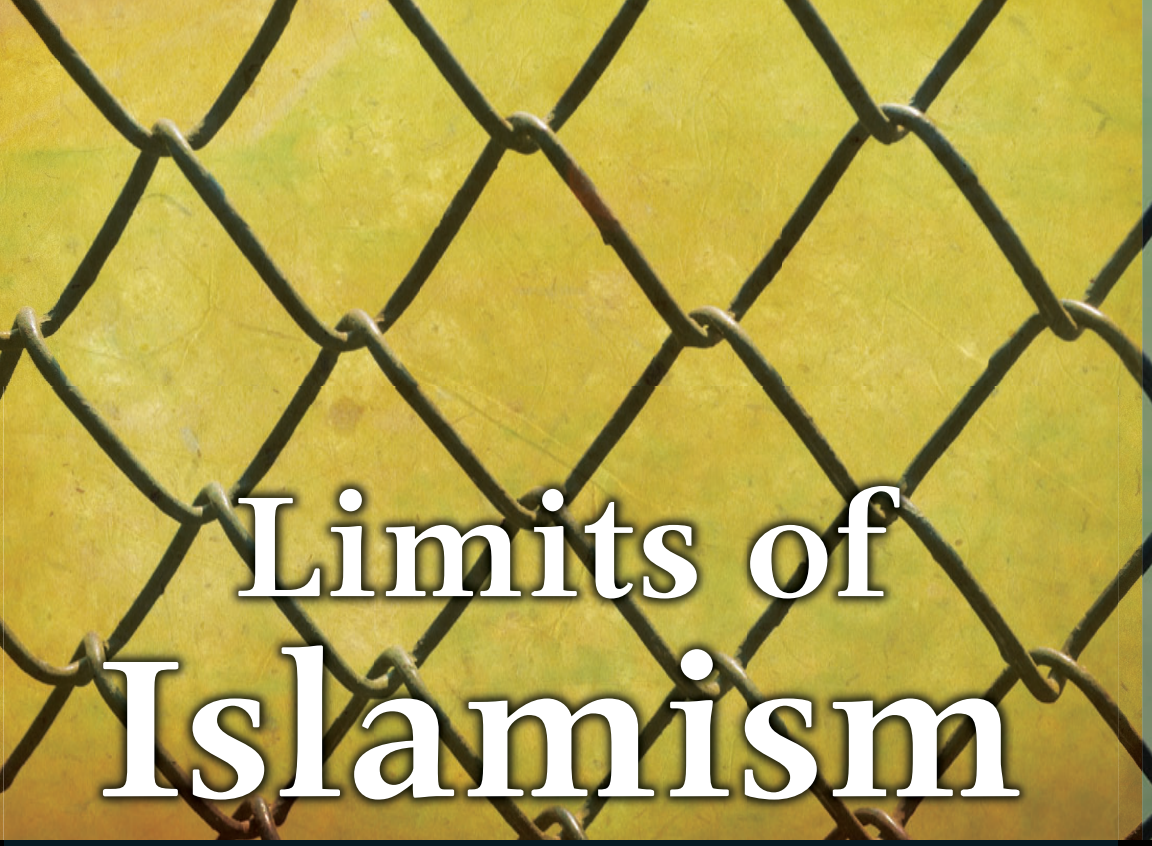


Limits of Islamism

Jamaat-e-Islami in Contemporary India and Bangladesh

Maidul Islam

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To my parents

Contents

List of Tables vii
Acknowledgements ix

Introduction: Islamism(s) of Academics and Islamists 1

Chapter 1: Islamism and Ideology: Philosophical Issues and Analytical Categories 60

Chapter 2: Islamism in Neoliberal India 95

Chapter 3: Ideological Articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind 122

Chapter 4: Islamism in a Muslim Majority Context: The Case of Bangladesh 170

Chapter 5: The Crisis of Islamist Populism of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami 200

Chapter 6: Islamism in Contemporary India and Bangladesh: Comparative Overview of the Politics of Alternative 235

Appendix 277
Bibliography 305
Index 335
About the Author 347

List of Tables

Table 5.1	Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1973 (total seats: 289)	213
Table 5.2	Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1979 (total seats: 300)	214
Table 5.3	Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1986 (total seats: 300)	215
Table 5.4	Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1991 (total seats: 300)	217
Table 5.5	Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1996 (total seats: 300)	219
Table 5.6	Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 2001 (total seats: 300)	221
Table 5.7	Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 2008 (total seats: 299)	222
Table 5.8	Details of votes in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 2014	223
Table 5.9	Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 2014 (total seats: 300)	224

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Introduction

Islamism(s) of Academics and Islamists

This book focusses on *Islamism* as a *political ideology* by taking the case of Jamaat-e-Islami in contemporary India and Bangladesh. In this regard, I have used Ernesto Laclau's ideology and discourse analysis method in conceptually grasping and analyzing the rhetoric of Jamaat. Therefore, primarily, the study will be in the theoretical framework of Laclau in ideology studies. In this respect, this book elaborates on the underlying politics of Islamism with reference to Laclau's theoretical insights into ideology and discourse analysis, particularly with regard to the *identification of the (political) enemy/antagonistic frontier* and the construction of *populist* political discourses as a *strategy of political mobilization*. That is to say, the book will, firstly, address how, in a contemporary globalized world, Islamists construct an antagonistic frontier and mobilize 'people' behind their political project. Secondly, the book examines the dynamics of the formation of Islamist politics for struggle for hegemony and its failure to become a hegemonic force in Bangladesh. Thirdly, the contradiction between Islamic universalism/Islamist populism, on the one hand, and a *politics of Muslim particularism* in India, on the other, is revealed in this study. Fourthly, the book also deals with the Islamist cultural critique of atheism, blasphemy, live-in relationships and homosexuality, which the (Jamaati) Islamists construe as products of 'Western cultural globalization'. In this respect, I try to analyze why Islamists are antagonistic to such issues. Finally, this book traces the contemporary crisis of Islamist populism in providing an *alternative* to neoliberalism. In this regard, I find a sophisticated conceptual signpost in Ernesto Laclau's theoretical framework in analyzing the empirical findings of the research.

Today, neoliberal capitalism is passing through a global crisis.[1] In this context, the study tries to answer the core question – can Islamism articulate a politics of alternative in a world marked by capitalist globalization and neoliberal consensus? Further questions related to the major theme are also addressed as follows – after the failure of the twentieth-century socialism, what happens to the *promise* and *goal* of Islamism in providing an alternative to capitalism? Can Islamism represent a politics of social transformation or is it only *limited* to a peculiar politics of resistance and critique to neoliberal capitalism?

Before analyzing the political ideology of Islamism, it is helpful to first survey the academic literature on Islamism, particularly Islamism as presented by Islamists and, then, re-presented by academics. In studying Islamism, first, one should question those assumptions that treat Islamism as a coherent and homogenous entity. The diversity of Islamism in varied spatio-cultural contexts is not only restricted to different genres of Islamist movements, but has also produced extensive debates over a range of analytical categories around which academics have studied Islamism. In this respect, I focus on the major themes and the logic that have been provided to explain the existence of Islamism. But before surveying the academic literature, let me first clarify the terms and concepts that I have often used in this book.

Clarifying terminologies

Fundamentalism or Islamism: Scholars and commentators have often used 'Pan-Islam',[2] 'militant Islam',[3] 'radical Islam',[4] 'Islamic

[1] Today, the 'global capitalist system' is grappling with the 'ecological crisis, the consequences of the biogenetic revolution, imbalances within the system itself (problems with intellectual property; forthcoming struggles over raw materials, food and water), and the explosive growth of social divisions and exclusions'. See Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2010), p. x. However, in this book, one will see how the Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami is responding more to the ecological issues, the big capital's control over land and water, and the problems of economic inequality and social exclusion.

[2] Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

[3] G. H. Hansen, *Militant Islam* (London: Pan Books, 1979); Robin Wright, *Sacred Rage: The Wrath of Militant Islam* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

[4] Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Gilles Kepel, *The Roots of Radical Islam* translated by Jon Rothschild (London: Saqi, 2005).

fundamentalism',[5] 'political Islam'[6] and 'Islamism'[7] as interchangeable concepts. Although some scholars have used semantic substitutions like 'political Islam' and 'Islamism' instead of 'fundamentalism', those usages have not successfully overcome the image of Islam within a section of mainstream media and academia as an 'anti-modern' religious tradition. Many scholars have also confused the concept of 'Islamic fundamentalism' with that of 'Islamic revivalism', 'extremism', 'fanaticism' and even 'terrorism' as if they all are the same. There are scholars, who have used 'fundamentalism' as an *analytical category*.[8] The coinage and usage of a loaded term like 'fundamentalism' in a Muslim context seems to be immensely contestable and unacceptable for many.[9] Scholars argue that the term 'fundamentalism' was

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5 William Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1988); Lawrence Davidson, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998); R. M. Burrell, ed. *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1989); Asaf Hussain, *Beyond Islamic Fundamentalism: The Sociology of Faith and Action* (Leicester: Volcano, 1992); Mohammad Mohaddessin, *Islamic Fundamentalism: The New Global Threat* (Washington: Seven Locks Press, 1993); Muhammad Rizvi, *The Roots of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Stockport: Raza Academy, 1994); Johannes J. G. Jansen, *The Dual Nature of Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Hurst, 1997).

6 John L. Esposito, ed. *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform*? (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Reinner, 1997); Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, eds. *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report* (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1997); Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991); Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, trans. Carol Volk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

7 Martin Kramer, ed. *The Islamism Debate* (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1997); Meghnad Desai, *Rethinking Islamism: The Ideology of the New Terror* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007); Peter R. Demant, *Islam vs Islamism: The Dilemma of the Muslim World* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006); Caroline Cox and John Marks, *The 'West', Islam and Islamism: Is Ideological Islam Compatible with Liberal Democracy?* (London: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2003); Timur Kuran, *Islam and Mammon: The Economic Predicaments of Islamism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

8 Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Project, Vols. 1–5* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991–1995); Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt against the Modern Age* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1995).

9 Roxanne L. Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism, A Work of Comparative Political Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 16; Riffat Hassan, 'The Burgeoning of Islamic Fundamentalism: Toward an Understanding of the Phenomenon', in Norman J. Cohen, ed. *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: A View from Within, A Response from Without* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), pp 151–171.

originally used to describe strands within Protestant Christianity in the early decades of the twentieth century.[10]

Most informed academics know that 'fundamentalism' is not specific to Islam and, in fact, 'has surfaced in most religions and seems to be a worldwide response to the peculiar strain of late-twentieth century life'.[11] Experts point out that at the beginning of the twentieth century, fundamentalism first surfaced in the United States, 'the showcase of modernity', and in this respect, both Christianity and Judaism had a much early experience of fundamentalist movements. Islam was among the last of the three monotheistic religions to develop a fundamentalist strand during late 1960s and 1970s when modernity began to take root in the Muslim world.[12] However, irrespective of the origins of 'fundamentalism' in any particular context or religion, a fascinating debate over using the term as an analytical category can be seen in the works of Sahgal and Yuval-Davis and the response by Sayyid.

By using 'fundamentalism' as an analytical category, Sahgal and Yuval-Davis argue that fundamentalism generally has three main features: (a) it is a political project that practices rejection of pluralism with a return to the holy text; (b) it is a movement that deliberately combines religion and politics to further its goals; and (c) it is a programme for controlling women.[13] In response, Sayyid's theoretically sophisticated work from a broad 'anti-essentialist' and 'anti-foundationalist' epistemological framework convincingly objects and problematizes each of the features being labelled to describe the phenomena of 'fundamentalism' in general and Islamism in particular.[14]

In this respect, the theoretical debate between Sahgal and Yuval-Davis on the one hand, and Sayyid on the other, repeats the binary construction of essentialist versus anti-essentialist representation of Islam(ism). While Sahgal and Yuval-Davis make broad generalizations and often stereotyped formulations about religious ideologies, Sayyid, avoids discussing certain core problems of gender inequality, like unequal property rights for women, unequal political rights for women and

[10] Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 118.

[11] Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (London: Gollancz, 1995), p. 11.

[12] Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001), pp 140–141.

[13] Gita Sahgal and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds. *Refusing Holy Orders: Women and Fundamentalism in Britain* (London: Virago, 1992), pp 3–8.

[14] S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, 1997, second edition (London: Zed Books, 2003), pp 8–17.

the right to use contraception to control reproduction, within Islamist discourses.[15] However, in agreement with Sayyid, in exploring the use of Islam for political protest and mobilization, conceptually, the term 'Islamism' is preferable because the terminology of 'Islamic fundamentalism' is problematic and using the term 'political Islam' is rather vague.[16]

Most academic works on Islamism, even that of Sayyid, regard it more as an identity-oriented political movement and less as an ideology. Although varied interpretations of the term exist, I shall use *Islamism* as a form of totalistic ideology that wishes to organize society, polity and economy around the centrality of Islamic religion. For the Islamists, Islam has something *positive* to offer and is *better* than any other existing ideological discourses. Islamists are those people who use the Islamic metaphoric language to think in terms of political destinies and see their political future through the prism of Islam.[17] In this respect, as Sayyid argues, an Islamist is someone 'who places her/his Muslim identity at the centre of her/his political practice', while Islamism 'is a discourse that attempts to centre Islam within the political order… (and) can range from the assertion of a Muslim subjectivity' to a serious attempt 'to reconstruct society on Islamic principles'.[18] I agree with Sayyid on these counts with a caveat that one can replace 'Muslim identity' and 'Muslim subjectivity' with 'Islamic identity' and 'Islamic subjectivity' as I fundamentally distinguish between the terms 'Muslim' and 'Islamic'.

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15 Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Woman in Islam* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2003); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Political Theory of Islam* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1998); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Birth Control: Its Social, Political, Economic, Moral and Religious Aspects* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2006); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *The Nature and Contents of Islamic Constitution*, ed. Khurshid Ahmad (Karachi: Jamaat-e-Islami Publications, 1959); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *The Islamic Law and Its Introduction in Pakistan*, ed. Khurshid Ahmad (Karachi: Jamaat-e-Islami Publications, 1955); Maulana Maududi, 'The Position of Islam with regard to Women', in *Selected Speeches and Writings of Maulana Maududi Vol. I*, second edition, trans. S. Zakir Aijaz (Karachi: International Islamic Publishers, 1988), p. 136; Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam* (London: Faber and Faber, 1982), p. 206; Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, 'Mawdudi and the Jama'at-i Islami: The Origins, Theory and Practice of Islamic Revivalism', in Ali Rahnema, ed. *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994), pp 108–110; Kalim Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan: Political Thought and Political Action* (New Delhi: Chetana Publications, 1977), pp 168–172; Sayed Riaz Ahmad, *Islam and Modern Political Institutions in Pakistan: A Study of Mawlana Mawdudi* (Rawalpindi: Ferozsons, 2004), pp 199–223.

16 Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 7.

17 Ibid, p. 17.

18 Ibid.

Muslim, Islamic and Islamist: In this study, I have differentiated the three distinct terms: (a) 'Muslim' or 'Muslim identity'; (b) 'Islamic' or 'Islamic identity'; and (c) 'Islamist' or 'Islamist identity'. For this differentiation, I have relied on how the Islamists have defined Islam as a combination of *din* (faith/religion), *dunya* (life) and *dawla* (state).[19] I argue that the term 'Muslim' constitutes a broad general category which both religious and non-religious persons can belong to or *identify* with. In other words, those people who do not practice Islamic religion in their everyday life but have *faith* in Islamic religion can be Muslims. Thus, 'Muslim world' in this study is used to represent the *collective* of those societies and countries, where the *majority* of the population has *faith* in Islamic religion but does not view Islam as a complete way of life or initiates political struggles to establish an Islamic political order. Whereas, people belonging to the second category of 'Islamic' are those who *practise* Islamic religion in their everyday life and might also believe that Islam is a *way of life* but do not have a political agenda to establish a Sharia-based Islamic state. However, 'Islamists' are those who not only believe that Islam is 'a way of life', but also claim that it is 'a *complete* way of life' and claim that it is an ideal holistic religion with a political agenda of building a Sharia-centric Islamic state. Therefore, the general formula according to my categorization in the book is that all 'Muslims' are not necessarily 'Islamic' or 'Islamists', whereas all 'Islamic' people are definitely 'Muslims' but not necessarily 'Islamists', and all 'Islamists' are certainly both 'Muslims' and 'Islamic'. The examples of Islamic organizations are Tablighi Jamaat, Jamiat-Ulema-i-Hind, etc., while Jamaat-e-Islami, Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Hamas, Hezbollah and the Muslim Brotherhood etc. can be categorized as Islamist organizations.

However, Islamist organizations form a broad political spectrum, and one can categorize them into three distinct groups in terms of operational strategies and attendant tactical questions related to the modes of capturing political power: (a) Parliamentary Islamists (b) Militant Islamists and (c) Extremist Islamists. The parliamentary Islamists generally use and choose parliamentary democratic methods such as participation in elections and mass mobilizations, like the Jamaat-e Islami in South Asia, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Refah Party in Turkey, etc. Militant Islamists use both parliamentary methods and armed violence like Hamas in

[19] Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 48. A similar kind of distinction between 'Islamic' and 'Islamist' is being made by Lahoud by questioning the Islamist claims of authenticity and absence of ambiguity in such claims by examining various classical and modern scholars and commentators on the Islamic scriptures relating to the separability/inseparability of politics/state/authority/caliphate with the basic principles and spirit of Islamic religion. See Nelly Lahoud, *Political Thought in Islam: A Study in Intellectual Boundaries* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005).

Palestine and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Extremist Islamists, however, use only violent and terroristic methods like the Al-Qaeda network, Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), also been called as Islamic State of Iraq and Levant or in short, Islamic State (IS) and groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba which are based in Pakistan and operate in Kashmir. In this book, I am not only interested in the specific tactics and strategies of an Islamist party like the Jamaat in India and Bangladesh but am also interested to look at its ideological articulations. To do such an exercise, I must clarify what I mean by political ideology.

Islamism as political ideology: The term 'political ideology' in this study is employed in the same sense that Freeden defines it as 'complex combinations and clusters of political concepts in sustainable patterns' and 'a wide-ranging structural arrangement that attributes *decontested* meanings to a range of mutually defining political concepts'.[20] Since 'ideologies are configurations of *decontested* meanings of political concepts',[21] any ideology would try to fix a definitive meaning to a particular concept that is essential for the subscribers of that particular ideology. For example, a particular ideology might assert that *this* is what 'justice' means or *that* is what 'equality' means or *such* a society might be *ideal*. In this respect, *decontestation* is the process of ending an 'inevitable contention over concepts…, by removing their meanings from contest'.[22] Thus, *decontestation* helps to provide a consensus of meanings or fixation of meanings about a political concept or a particular set of political concepts for those who subscribe to a particular ideology. It is, therefore, opposed to *deconstruction* by which multiple meanings of any particular concept can be revealed. By such acts of *decontestation*, ideologies make truth claims and 'closure of debate'[23] to arrive at certain conclusive decisions. Since *decision* is an 'expression of finality (real or manufactured), signalling the closure of discussion', ideologies generally 'strive to provide the certainty that underpins such finality'.[24] In doing such acts of *decontestation*, the ideologues 'claim to champion the "correct" meanings of the political concepts to which they refer'.[25] While *decontestation* of political concepts might *close* the debate *within* a particular ideological tradition, competing ideological discourses can certainly *challenge/contest* such *decontestation* of several political concepts. For example, distinct ideologies like Liberalism, Marxism

[20] Michael Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 51, 54.

[21] Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 76.

[22] Freeden, *Ideology*, p. 54.

[23] Ibid, p. 68.

[24] Ibid, p. 55.

[25] Ibid.

and Islamism might have quite different notions of *justice*, *equality* or *ideal society* and would then *disagree* with each other on the 'true' or 'correct' meaning of those political concepts. Hence, 'control of political language' is a 'necessary feature of ideological act', which precisely is 'the decontestation of the essentially contestable'.[26]

It is this problem of 'closure' or fixation of meaning via *decontestation* that brings Freeden close to Laclau's concept of ideology as 'the representational, metaphorical and precarious closure that stabilizes meaning within specific contexts'.[27] As Laclau proclaims, '[t]he ideological would consist of those discursive forms through which a society tries to institute itself as such on the basis of closure, of the fixation of meaning… The ideological would be the will to "totality" of any totalizing discourse'.[28] At the same time, Freeden argues that 'Decontestation, though central to political argument, is never conclusive'[29] to which Laclau and Mouffe had previously pointed out such 'impossibility of an ultimate fixity of meaning', implying that there would always be 'partial fixations'.[30] Thus, both 'ambiguity' and 'certainty' are two necessary features of any ideology.[31] The tendency of cementing, closure, fixation and decontestation of meanings within any ideological discourse represents the *certainty* of ideological 'truths' or 'correctness', while 'inconclusiveness', 'indeterminacy' and 'vagueness' of meaning and decisions,[32] on the one hand, and the existence of 'ideological dissent', on the other, might add to the *ambiguity* of ideology, thus, making 'reasonable ideological disagreement' possible.[33] Thus, ideologies are not *monolithic static belief systems*, but they are like languages that contain certain concepts whose meaning(s) might change or evolve over time. The *relative political success* of an ideology depends on its ability to impose the belief that its own conceptual definitions are the 'correct ones'.

By following the meaning of 'ideology' and 'ideological' in both Freeden and Laclau, the term *Islamism* is primarily used in this book to connote a modern political ideology, quite distinct from Islamic theology, with its universalistic appeal, and a particularistic 'ideologization' of Islamic religion around certain

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[26] Michael Freeden, 'What Should "Political" in Political Theory Explore', *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2005), p. 119.

[27] Ernesto Laclau, 'Ideology and post-Marxism', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 2006), p. 103.

[28] Ernesto Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 92.

[29] Freeden, 'What Should "Political" in Political Theory Explore', p. 119.

[30] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* [1985] 2nd edn. (London: Verso, 2001), p. 112.

[31] Freeden, *Ideology*, p. 57.

[32] Freeden, 'What Should "Political" in Political Theory Explore', pp 117-124.

[33] Freeden, *Ideology*, p. 126.

key decontested concepts, whose meanings are generally fixed by the prominent Islamist ideologues, while closing down ideological dissent over the use of accepted definitions of any particular political concept. Nonetheless, over time, such fixation of meanings can change/vary under specific contexts. In this book, I will show how Islamist discourses can also reinterpret and reformulate meanings of specific political concepts within their ideological repertoire. By 'ideologization' of Islamic religion, I mean treating Islam not simply as a ritualistic religion in the private realm, but assigning political responsibility and duties to its core audience/constituency of Muslims to achieve distinct political goals, based on specific political concepts and rhetoric, where both private and public domains converge in constructing Islam as a complete way of life. This ideologization of religion, as argued later, is possible since religion itself gives that scope to particular political actors to idealize and politicize it.

Thus, Islamism can be defined as assigning political overtone to the religion of Islam, where Islam is not simply regarded as a religion but a political ideology comprising a set of political concepts with distinct political goals like the establishment of an Islamic state. For the Islamists, the religion of Islam in itself is a political ideology and a guide to programmatic political action.[34] Therefore, Islamism is the idealization of Islam, while presenting Islam as a totality, by constructing it as a 'holistic way of life' which has socio-economic, political, moral and spiritual goals, and giving Islamic justifications for its specific modes of political thinking and action.[35] So, when Islamists urge adherence to Islam in its totality, they hardly make any distinction between an ideological worldview and fundamental tenets of religion. In fact, they see Islam not as a religion but as an ideology. It is interesting to note that what scholars describe as 'Islamism', the Islamists describe as 'Islam'. That is to say, the ideological articulations of Islamism by Islamists are justified in the name of Islam. Thus, for academicians,

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[34] The Jamaat-e-Islami website claims that 'Islam is the ideology of the Jamaat'. See http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=124&blockid=31 accessed on 5 June 2010. Its policy and programme also claims that its 'objective' is the 'establishment of the DEEN (the divinely ordained way of life known as Islam'. See *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind [JIH] Policy and Programme,* April 2007–March 2011 (New Delhi: Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, 2007), p. 3. The same argument can be found in the pamphlet of Jamaat founder Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, trans. Khurshid Ahmad and Dr Abdul Ghani (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1960).

[35] The JIH policy and programme claims that it 'has been striving to establish Islam in its totality, in all aspects of human life – individual as well as collective – related to the inner self as well as the external world'. See *JIH Policy and Programme,* p. 3. The same argument can be also found in the pamphlet of Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi, *The Islamic Way of Life*, second edition (Lahore: Markazi Maktaba Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, 1955).

Islamism is an ideology, whereas for Islamists, Islam is *the* ideology. For scholars, Islamism is only a particular interpretation of Islam, whereas, for Islamists, *their* interpretation of Islam as a complete way of life is the only *correct* form of Islam and, hence, all other interpretations where Islam is not presented as a totality violates the very spirit of Islam.

In this study, I describe the Islamist ideology of Jamaat-e-Islami as *Jamaati Islamism*. However, the book deals with the ideological *articulations* of Jamaat-e-Islami. In this respect, let me clarify how I have used the term *articulation* in this study.

Articulation: I have used 'articulation' in the Laclau and Mouffe's sense of the term where it is regarded as *any practice* that establishes a relationship 'among elements such that their *identity* is *modified* as a result of the articulatory practice'[36] (emphasis mine). Thus, articulation as a concept is related to *practice* within the theoretical framework of Laclau and Mouffe.[37] In this book, one can see how Jamaat-e-Islami articulates its ideological positions by its specific politico-ideological practices. The concept of articulation, however, leads to the concept of *discourse*. Laclau and Mouffe state that 'the structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice' can be called *discourse*.[38] But a discourse has to be *available* in order to be a discourse. In this respect, let me clarify how I have used the category of 'available'/'availability' in this study. I have used the concept of 'available'/'availability' in the Laclauian sense of the term. As Laclau argues, '[M]ere availability is on occasion enough to ensure the victory of a particular discourse… The discourse of a "new order" is often accepted by several sectors, not because they particularly like its content but because it is the discourse of *an* order, of something that is presented as a credible alternative to a crisis and a generalized dislocation. This does not mean, of course, that *any* discourse putting itself forward as the embodiment of fullness will be accepted. The acceptance of a discourse depends on its credibility, and this will not be granted if its proposals clash with the basic principles informing the organization of a group'.[39] Therefore, Laclau uses the concept of *availability* in relation to the category of *credibility* within

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[36] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. 105.

[37] Laclau and Mouffe's concept of articulation is further elaborated in Jason Glynos and David Howarth, *Logics of Critical Explanation in Social and Political Theory* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 165, pp 177–180.

[38] Laclau and Mouffe take the concept of discourse from Foucault apart from complementing with analytical philosophy of Wittgenstein, the phenomenology of Heidegger and Lacanian theory. See *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, pp 10–11, pp 105–113. However, a Foucauldian framework or taking recourse to analytical philosophy of both early and later Wittgenstein, or the 'existential analytic' of Heidegger or Lacanian theory is beyond the scope of my book.

[39] Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, p. 66.

a given set of population. In this book, I will precisely try to show how neoliberalism and Islamism, which are both 'available' to a given population, contest each other to become credible within such a population. Besides such a contestation between neoliberalism and Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh, one can also see a contestation between Islamism and secular-nationalism in Bangladesh. In this regard, I have argued in this book that Islamism was a politico-ideological movement came to prominence and continues to exist in the Muslim world by challenging the varied forms of secular-nationalist political models which were governed by the logic of Eurocentrism. Let me first clarify the term 'Eurocentrism'.

Eurocentrism: Samir Amin argues that 'Eurocentrism', as a 'dominant social phenomena' is similar to the 'analogous Orientalist construct', which portrays a racist historiography.[40] Amin argues that Eurocentrism basically identifies the 'European superiority', in the form of 'free enterprise and the market, secularism, and pluralist electoral democracy', as exclusive an invention of Europe/West.[41] The Eurocentric discourse according to Amin, describes 'progressive Westernization' as the 'expression of the triumph of the humanist universalism invented by Europe', which assumes 'the superiority of the capitalist system'.[42] Sayyid succinctly summarizes Amin's thesis that 'eurocentrism is best understood as a cultural phenomenon based on the principle that "the West knows best" and which projects progressive Westernization as the destiny of the world'.[43]

While agreeing with Amin that Eurocentrism is currently hegemonic,[44] Sayyid criticizes Amin's description of Eurocentrism as 'primarily a culturalist phenomenon', which in effect, turns the 'problem of eurocentrism into a sub-species of the general problem of capitalism'.[45] This happens, as Sayyid argues, because of Amin's theoretical framework of 'historical materialism'.[46] As a result, Amin locates 'Islamic fundamentalism' as a 'rejection of "eurocentrism and imperialist universalism" based on affirmation of "Arab-Islamic specificity"'.[47] In this regard, the problem with Amin's book is that he is 'totally within the discourse of modernity' without recognizing how 'modernity itself projects its identity as a

40 Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism: Modernity, Religion, and Democracy: A Critique of Eurocentrism and Culturalism,* 1988, trans. Russell Moore and James Membrez, second edition (Oxford: Monthly Review Press & Pambazuka Press, 2011), pp 165–179.

41 Ibid, p. 180.

42 Ibid.

43 Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 127.

44 Ibid, p. 129.

45 Ibid, p. 127.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid, p. 128.

reflection of its Western genealogy'.[48] By contrast, Sayyid defines Eurocentrism as a project when the centrality and universality of the West has been questioned and problematized.[49] Similarly, Hamid Dabashi has recently argued that the 'West is no more' and, today, we live in a world where a declining and dying 'West' signifies that orientalist binaries like 'West' and 'East', 'Islam and the West', 'religion versus secularism' or 'West and the rest' have become exhausted and irrelevant.[50]

While Amin's critique of Eurocentrism is Marxist, Sayyid's critique of Amin's book is an ontological one by locating the conditions of possibility for Eurocentrism in the context of a crisis of Western universality along with a crisis of the centrality of the project of Western modernity. However, it must also be acknowledged that Amin describes Marxism as a *critique* within the West as well as a *critique* to the dominant ideology of Western liberalism and the economic system of capitalism. Therefore, Sayyid misreads Amin by not focussing on the internal antagonism posited by Marxism within Western modernity. By not looking at the internal contradictions within the tradition of European modernity, Sayyid oversimplifies and generalizes the 'West' and 'Western modernity' as homogenous concepts. As Sayyid argues that 'the West cannot be separated from modernity'[51] since 'Modernity can be described as a discourse which formed and consolidated Europe'.[52] This is almost an *essentialist reading* of the 'West' and 'modernity', despite Sayyid being critical of essentialism. If one does not see modernity, specifically arising from the geographical location of West/Europe as Sayyid seems to argue, then Islamist discourses can also be regarded as 'modern'. There are authoritative works on the subject, which argue that although Islamism is opposed to 'Western civilization' and claims to match the system of capitalism and socialism, it 'is in its way a profoundly "modern" movement, concerned to chart an Islamically based path of progress for Muslim societies'.[53] In fact, Islamism has been seen as much closer to the modern ideology of totalitarianism.[54] Thus, Islamism can make sense in the context of modernity[55] as the emergence of Islamism does not 'represent

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid, pp 128–129.

[50] Hamid Dabashi, *Being a Muslim in the World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp 2–4.

[51] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 104.

[52] Ibid, p. 107.

[53] Francis Robinson, *Islam, South Asia, and the West* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 200.

[54] Michael Whine, 'Islamism and Totalitarianism: Similarities and Differences', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Autumn 2001), pp 54–72.

[55] Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State*, 1988 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), pp 1–82.

the triumph of traditionalism over modernity'[56] because it is a 'distinctly modern phenomenon which has historical analogues but no parallels'.[57] Thus, there are only certain discourses of modernity that construct its 'Other' as the 'traditional'. In fact, Islam was identified with 'primitivism', 'tradition' and 'anti-modernity' by the Eurocentric Kemalists in Turkey[58], much akin to the stereotyping of Islam by several narratives of orientalism.[59]

Since I think that Eurocentrism is currently 'hegemonic', in this study, by 'Eurocentrism', I mean an *ultimate acceptance,* if not always an uncritical acceptance, of *Western* forms of ideological and developmental paradigms that had its genealogical roots in the Euro-American world. I am emphasizing 'ultimate acceptance' instead of 'uncritical acceptance' because several post-colonial regimes, which are nonetheless Eurocentric by mimicking the politico-ideological and developmental models of Euro-American societies, have a history of strong *critique* against Western colonialism and share the legacy of anti-colonial struggles like Kemalism, Nasserism, Baathism, Nehruvian regime, etc. Moreover, there can be two possible forms of Eurocentrism. One, which is located *inside* the Euro-American world and carries forward the legacy of Orientalism and racist historiography as pointed out by Amin; or those discourses interested in *recentering the West* during the contemporary crisis of Western universality as argued by Sayyid. Two, which is located *outside* the Euro-American zone, particularly in the post-colonial world, which *mimics* the Euro-American world from a distance and which ultimately accepts Euro-American superiority. Both forms of Eurocentrism eulogize the West/Euro-Americans but the former is a position of *assertion*, while the latter is a position of *mimicry* and, thus, represents the unequal power relationship between the Western metropolitan centre and third-world periphery between the Euro-American cultural colonizer and the Oriental colonized, and between the hegemonic position of the former and the hegemonized position of the latter.

By *Western* ideological and developmental paradigms, I mean those ideological traditions and developmental discourses that have *incidentally* originated in the geographical territory known as Europe and America. Here, by 'incidental', I mean an *occurrence of an event* whose objectivity is unquestionable. In other words, it is

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[56] Mansoor Moaddel, *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 257.

[57] Bhikhu Parekh, 'The Concept of Fundamentalism', in Alexsandras Shtromas, ed. *The End of "Isms"? Reflections on the Fate of Ideological Politics after Communism's Collapse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 107.

[58] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 73.

[59] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

an *objective fact* that certain ideological traditions and development paradigms as distinct and antagonistic to each other like liberal-capitalism, state-socialism and neoliberalism, have incidentally originated either in Europe or North America. Whether such ideological and developmental paradigms could have emerged in the non-Western world or why such ideologies and developmental discourses could not emerge in the Oriental/Muslim world is beyond the scope of this book. Also, I am not making a *value judgement* about whether the Western or the Islamic/Orient is the *best* way forward for the destiny of humanity. Rather, as a student of political theory, I am approaching the issue with the concept of *hegemony*.

In a simple Gramscian sense, I mean 'hegemony' as a *rule with consent* where the 'spontaneous' consent of the ruled is earned by the ruling power bloc by either the superior position and function of the rulers (often prestige and confidence historically enjoyed by the rulers) or coercion/direct domination/command by the power bloc, in 'legally' enforcing discipline on those (ruled) who do not give 'consent' either actively or passively.[60] In this respect, the *structure of hegemonic power* is a complex relationship between 'dominance' of the elite and the 'subordination' of the subaltern.[61] However, *dominance* is again a complex of 'persuasion' and 'coercion', while the complex of *subordination* includes as its elements 'collaboration' and 'resistance'.[62] Thus, hegemony is maintained through either persuasion or coercion by the ruler over the ruled or collaboration of the ruled with the ruling power bloc. It is only the element of 'resistance' within the subaltern that foregrounds the possibility of counter-hegemony. Nonetheless, hegemony of the power bloc is never complete since any dominant discourse is *necessarily incomplete*, which means that any form of hegemony is always *contingent* and *momentary*[63] and, thus, hegemony 'epitomizes the elite's dream'.[64] It is the inability of the hegemon to fully hegemonize a given political field that gives scope to launch a counter-hegemonic movement or resistance by the dominated/ruled against the hegemon.

Therefore, I am interested in looking at whether Eurocentrism or Islamism is hegemonic in contemporary India and Bangladesh or whether the hegemony

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60 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, 1971, (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1996), p. 12.

61 Ajit Chaudhuri, 'From Hegemony to Counter-Hegemony: A Journey in a Non-Imaginary Unreal Space', *Economic and Political Weekly: Review of Political Economy*, Vol. 23, No. 5 (January 30, 1988), p. 19.

62 Ibid.

63 For an elaborate theoretical analysis of hegemony, its limits and incompleteness see Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

64 Chaudhuri, 'From Hegemony to Counter-Hegemony', p. 19.

of one is challenged by the other; and if one's hegemony is challenged by the other, how it is being challenged. In this respect, I argue that Eurocentric approaches range from mimicking the Western secularist model of segregation of religion from politics, to the recognition of sovereignty of ethno-linguistic nation–states and, by that logic, to the celebration of nationalism, the infrastructural modernization by either liberal–capitalist or state–socialist models of development, and to accepting either dictatorial or democratic forms of government like 'enlightened despotism', military dictatorships or representative democracy. Thus, I argue that the Eurocentric model implemented in several Muslim countries is actually a *mimicry* of the Western world and an ultimate acceptance of the proposition that the way forward to *progress* and *development* is the *Western path*, while affirming the Eurocentric assertion that 'there is nothing outside the Western project'.[65] Islamism precisely opposes such a logic and argues that 'progress' and 'development' can be made without borrowing the ideas from outside the Islamic tradition, and without taking refuge in any 'man-made' laws, ideologies and systems, irrespective of its Western or non-Western origins.[66] In the specific context of the Muslim world, Islamism has challenged such a Eurocentric vision, namely Kemalism.

Kemalism: The Eurocentric model of secular-nationalism propagated by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey in the 1920s, popularly known as Kemalism, was later introduced by the Westernized and modernizing political leadership (the Kemalist elites) in many parts of the Muslim world in the post-war international scenario, who regarded Islam as peripheral to the concerns of the state.[67] In this respect, 'Kemalism' can be described as a 'metaphor' for various 'Muslim regimes that emerged following decolonization'.[68] Although, variations of Kemalism might exist in different Muslim countries, the term has been used by Sayyid to read a 'wider Muslim political context'.[69] In agreement with Sayyid, I shall argue that the secular-nationalist model adopted by Sheikh Mujib in Bangladesh had close parallels with Kemalism. Thus, in Chapter 4 of this book, I will elaborate on the

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65 Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 135.

66 The Islamist literature critiquing 'secularism', 'nationalism', 'capitalism', 'socialism' and 'western democracy' can be seen in Maududi, *Political Theory of Islam*; Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2003); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *West versus Islam* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2006); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Our Message* (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1981); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *The Question of Dress* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1994); Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2000).

67 Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 78.

68 Ibid, p. 52.

69 Ibid, p. 53.

politico-ideological project of Mujibism in Bangladesh as a specific variant of Kemalism. But let me first elaborate on the term *Kemalism*.

According to Laclau, 'six key words of the programme of the Turkish Republic which were represented as six arrows on the emblem of the Republican People's Party at the beginning of the 1930s – republicanism, nationalism, populism, revolutionism, secularism and etatism – supposed to be the pillars of Kemalist ideology'.[70] Similarly, before Laclau's commentary on the subject, Sayyid had identified four guiding principles of Kemalism: (a) Secularism (b) Nationalism (c) Modernization and (d) Westernization.[71] Çelik also points out how Kemalism gives priority to 'secularization, modernization and rationalization of society'.[72] For Mustafa Kemal, secularism is a 'necessary component of modernization and social change'.[73] The official attitude of the Kemalist government towards Islam was Laicism (*Layiklik*, meaning secularism in Turkish)[74], a policy of separating religion from the matters of the state and the nation.[75] Thus, the Kemalist discourse was based on the exclusion of Islamic religion from the public domain.[76] However, Turkish secularization under the Kemalist project differed from its European counterpart in two respects. Firstly, it was forced as a 'political measure under the control of an autocratic and statist government' in which secularization did not spring 'automatically from economic modernization' and secondly, it was 'consciously mimetic in that it took Europe as its specific model of adaptation'.[77]

In this respect, it should be borne in mind that the discourse of secularism is neither a European monopoly nor did it originate during the period of European Renaissance and Enlightenment. There were varied strands of secularism in the oriental world, right from the prominent atheistic philosophy of Cārvāka that denied the existence of God and the afterlife to the skeptic-materialist philosophy of Lokāyata, and various forms of agnosticism and ideas of Godlessness like Buddhism and Jainism in ancient India.[78] All of these, including Pūrva Mīmāmsā,

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70 Ernesto Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 208.

71 Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, pp 63–69.

72 Nur Betül Çelik, 'The constitution and dissolution of the Kemalist imaginary', in David Howarth, Aletta J. Norval and Yannis Stavrakakis, eds. *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 195.

73 Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 64.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

76 Ibid, p. 78.

77 Bryan S. Truner, *Weber and Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 168.

78 Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (London: Allen Lane, 2005), pp 16–25.

Sāmkhya and Nyāya Vaisheshika, were 'philosophies of committed atheism'.[79] Then, there were ideas of tolerance for religious diversity like in ancient Indian emperor Ashoka or medieval Indian emperor Akbar.[80] Also, the medieval Muslim thinkers, Abu Bakr al-Rāzī (Rhazes), Ibn al-Rāwandī and al-Warraq's radical doubts and criticism on the legitimacy of prophet-hood, prophetic religions and the Quran[81] and the 'freethinker', al-Ma'ari's thoughts on similar grounds[82] were distinctively secular ideas. Thus, secularism need not be learnt and mimicked from the West by the post-colonial societies, unless it is committed or subservient to Eurocentrism.

The Kemalists regarded the Westphalian system of nation–states as the only 'legitimate and scientific form of a political community'.[83] In adopting nationalism as a guiding principle of the Kemalist project, it systematically constructed a 'collective memory' by the means of promoting the 'Turkish history research', that had earlier tried to overcome the multinational character of the Ottoman Empire that Kemalism replaced with the abolition of the caliphate in favour of a 'homogenous' nation–state as the only credible form of political community.[84] Similarly, 'modernization' and 'Westernization' were almost similar in Kemalist discourses for they believed that 'being modern meant being like the Europeans'.[85]

The Kemalist programme also influenced other Muslim regimes as well like Reza Shah's modernization project (the 'Pahlavist strategy') in Iran,[86] Nasserism

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79 Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Indian Atheism: A Marxist Analysis*, 1969. (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1980), p. 29.

80 Sen, *The Argumentative Indian*, pp 17–18.

81 Paul E. Walker, 'The Political Implications of al-Rāzī's Philosophy', in Charles E. Butterworth, ed. *The Political Aspects of Islamic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Muhsin S. Mahdi* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 68; Sarah Stroumsa, *Freethinkers of Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Rawāndī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and Their Impact on Islamic Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Edward Grant, *A History of Natural Philosophy: From the Ancient World to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp 84–87; Peter S. Groff, *Islamic Philosophy A–Z* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp 179–181; John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 263.

82 Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs*, 1930. (London: Kegan Paul International, 1998), pp 316–324; Philip K. Hitti, *Islam: A Way of Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), pp 147–148.

83 Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 65.

84 Ibid, p. 66, p. 78.

85 Ibid, p. 67.

86 Ibid, pp 69–71.

in Egypt,[87] some of anti-FIS groups in Algeria[88] and the Baathist regime of Iraq.[89] For Kemalists, to be 'truly modernized', one must 'reproduce' European culture; and the process of such reproduction could not simply be an 'inspiration' but the 'European miracle' could only be 'imitated, duplicated and doubled'.[90] This process of 'imitation' and 'duplication' of the West by the Eurocentric Kemalist regimes is what I have previously referred to as *mimicry*.[91]

In this regard, mimicking the West by the post-colonial Kemalist discourses actually distorts the Western project. In the process of such mimicking, Kemalism cannot fully achieve its goal to be like the West. Therefore, Kemalism produces a difference between being *Western* and being *Westernized*. The latter is represented by the Kemalists, while the former is synonymous to the West. In mimicking the West, Kemalism cannot retain the *originality* of the Western project although it inherits its certain qualities and elements. Thus, Kemalist post-colonial regimes, established after the formal exit of European colonialists from the Muslim world, actually carry the *imprint* of 'Western colonialism' via its Eurocentric vision, which ultimately accepts the superiority of the West.

Therefore, such post-colonial regimes actually carry the legacy of colonialism but without a colonizer or, in other words, (post)colonialism without a colonizer, where the colonizer is hidden behind the veil of postcolonial hegemony.[92] Thus, I have used *Kemalism* as a post-colonial variant of Eurocentrism in the Muslim world that *mimics* the Euro-American world by ultimately accepting the superiority of Western ideological and developmental paradigms in resolving the various problems of any given set of population within a particular territory of the nation–state. In the specific context of Bangladesh as a nation–state, *Mujibism* eventually turned out to be the *mimicry* of Kemalism by celebrating (Bengali) nationalism on the one hand, and secularism on the other, apart from forcefully displacing the religious parties from mainstream politics. In this respect, Islamism can be seen as a critique of ideas like nation–state, nationalism and secularism, which according to the Islamists carry the imprint of Western politico-ideological epistemology.

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87 Ibid.

88 Ibid, p. 72.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid, p. 68.

91 The concept of 'mimicry' has been dealt from psychoanalytical point of view in Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller and trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth, Eng: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 73, pp 98–99. Furthermore, the post-colonial theorist, Bhabha has also elaborated on Lacan's concept of mimicry. See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp 86–90.

92 Ajit Chaudhury, Dipankar Das and Anjan Chakrabarti, *Margin of Margin: Profile of an Unrepentant Postcolonial Collaborator* (Calcutta: Anusthup, 2000), pp 2–3.

In this respect, one needs to theoretically understand the problematic relationship between Islamism and the nation-state.

Islamism and nation-state: Generally, Islamists believe in the Universalist concept of *Ummah* (Muslim community of believers), which is conceptually a supranational or transnational union. The Islamists call for unity of the *Ummah*, which is based on the belief that Muslims throughout the world should have a certain sense of solidarity among them cutting across the borders of the nation-state. In this respect, Islamism has justifications to oppose the concept of the nation-state. In the specific case of *Jamaati Islamism*, Maududi was himself opposed to the idea of nation-state and nationalism.[93] However, after the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 by the Kemalist policies, there is hardly any symbolic global theo-political authority among the Muslims. Therefore, in a post-colonial and post-Khilafat world, the Universalist idea of the Muslim *Ummah* encounters the particularist entity of new and emerging nation-states. What should an Islamist party do when it has to operate within the geographical confines of the nation-state? Should it altogether discard the Universalist concept of *Ummah* from its ideological vocabulary or should it just rhetorically appeal to the *Ummah* to stand up against what they call the 'evil' politico-ideological influences of the 'West', despite the fact that it has to operate within the particular territory of a given nation-state. In this book, one can notice how *Jamaati Islamism* has to take into account the specific political context of the nation-state in India and Bangladesh.

In this book, one can also see that in contemporary India and Bangladesh, where neoliberal globalization has facilitated the increasing role of multinational actors in the realm of both political economy and culture, the Jamaat has almost given a nationalist response to such globalization of economy and culture in opposing the ventures of multinational corporations and what they call 'Western cultural globalization'. Moreover, as one will later notice in this book, since the Jamaat operates within the distinct political contexts of the nation-states in India and Bangladesh, it makes tactical adjustments with the nation-state. For example, it includes the distinct Indian and Bangladeshi identity in its name (Jamaat-e-Islami Hind [JIH] in India and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami). Secondly, it accepts the idea of Indian secularism and, of late, accepts the glory of the Bangladesh Liberation Movement despite its initial opposition to the idea of a separate independent Bangladesh from Pakistan right from the 1950s onwards. Recently, Arshin Adib-Moghaddam has argued that, by and large, myriad Islamist movements have

[93] Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Nationalism and India* (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1993); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Nations: Rise and Fall Why?* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2001); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *The Sick Nations of the Modern Age* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1952).

accepted the nation-state 'as an organizational principle of the international system which re-inscribes the authority of national governments into the global order'.[94]

However, Talal Asad offers a caveat that although Islamism has always 'addressed itself directly to the nation-state, it should not be regarded as a form of nationalism'.[95] This is precisely because 'Islamic *umma*' is not 'an imagined community' equivalent of any nation-state; it 'is ideologically not "a society" onto which *state*, *economy* and *religion* can be mapped' as it is 'neither limited nor sovereign', and 'can eventually embrace all of humanity'.[96] However, as Adib-Moghaddam suggests, in the presence of the nation-states, Islamism can certainly be 'not an emblem of the political uniformity of the *umma*'.[97] In this respect, I will discuss how the Jamaat faces an ideological contradiction while choosing the Universalist concept of *Ummah* as a collective political actor within the specific political context of the nation-state that, in effect, *limits* the idea of the *Ummah*. But before doing such an exercise, it is important to define Neoliberalism, which according to the Islamists is one of their adversaries, as I shall show later in this book.

Islamism and neoliberalism: The specific focus of my enquiry into Islamist political ideology is the complex relationship between neoliberalism and Islamism by unravelling the distinct nature of politico-ideological articulations of Islamism in a neoliberal policy regime. Hence, it will analyze the nature of Islamist response to neoliberalism by discussing the contrasting conditions of India and Bangladesh. In particular, I will show, under what conditions Islamism opposes or critiques neoliberalism, and under what situations, it remains mute in critiquing neoliberalism. But let me first discuss the concept of neoliberalism to clarify how I have used it in this study.

Harveys' definition of neoliberalism as a theory of political economic practices in promoting individual entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional set-up characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade, is an evocative one.[98] Harvey further adds that neoliberalism adheres to 'free market principles of neo-classical economics that had emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century' and 'deeply opposed to state interventionist theories' of Keynes,

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[94] Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, *A Metahistory of the Clash of Civilisations: Us and Them Beyond Orientalism* (London: Hurst, 2011), p. 166.

[95] Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam and Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 199.

[96] Ibid, pp 197–198.

[97] Adib-Moghaddam, *A Metahistory of the Clash of Civilisations*, p. 167.

[98] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 2.

which were responding to the Great Depression of the 1930s.[99] Experts argue that neoliberal ideology believes that 'open, competitive, and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, represent the optimal mechanism for economic development'.[100] Similarly, Moody has concisely described neoliberalism as 'a mixture of neoclassical economic fundamentalism, market regulation in place of state guidance, economic redistribution in favour of capital (known as supply-side economics), moral authoritarianism with an idealized family at its centre, international free-trade principles (sometimes inconsistently applied), and a thorough intolerance of trade unionism'.[101] Neoliberalism generally promotes privatization and liberalization in the public sector and deregulation in the private sector, with a 'juridicopolitical framework' that passively supports market solutions apart from supporting free trade and capital mobility.[102] The outcome of neoliberalization has, in fact, weakened or dismantled various institutional regulations on the markets, the commodities, the unlimited exploitation of workers and the powers of private capital that were established through a series of popular struggles in the first six decades of the twentieth century.[103]

However, neoliberalism as an ideology took decades 'to emerge in force, germinated from the 1940s until it flowered in the 1980s'.[104] As Freeden points out, neoliberalism consolidated under conservative governments and prioritized libertarianism over any other liberal core concepts.[105] From the early 1970s, the global capitalist system became increasingly neoliberalized due to the crisis of the 'Fordist–Keynesian accumulation regime' and the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system.[106] However, neoliberalism, both as theory and practice, has been transformed from the 'abstract intellectualism of Hayek and Friedman', a philosophical project of the early 1970s, primarily focussed on restoring 'free-market thinking within economics profession and its subsequent (re) constitution as the theoretical high ground', to the 'state-authored restructuring projects of Thatcher and Reagan' in the 1980s that became a form of 'neoliberal

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[99] Ibid, pp 20–21.

[100] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, 'Cities and the Geographies of "Actually Existing Neoliberalism",' *Antipode*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2002) p. 350.

[101] Kim Moody, *Workers in a Lean World: Unions in the International Economy* (London: Verso, 1997), pp 119–120.

[102] Bob Jessop, 'Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance: A State-Theoretical Perspective', *Antipode*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2002) pp 461–462.

[103] Pierre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York: New Press, 1998).

[104] Freeden, *Ideology*, p. 127.

[105] Ibid, p. 95.

[106] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, 'From the "New Localism" to the Spaces of Neoliberalism', *Antipode*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2002) p. 342.

conviction politics' with the state power being mobilized for 'marketization and deregulation projects, aimed particularly at the central institutions of the Keynesian–Welfarist settlement'.[107] Such a neoliberal project was justified in the context of macroeconomic crisis of the 1970s, which was entirely blamed on the 'Keynesian financial regulation, unions, corporatist planning, state ownership and "overregulated" labour markets'.[108] By the mid-1980s, neoliberalism became the 'dominant political and ideological form of capitalist globalization'.[109]

Harvey argues that neoliberal doctrine emphasized 'anti-inflationary fiscal responsibility' and adopted monetarist policies instead of 'Keynesian orthodoxy' which led the government to deregulate economy, tax cuts, budget cuts and was 'an all-out assault on the powers of organized labour'.[110] From such a policy vantage point, a neoliberal state, according to Harvey, treats 'labour and the environment as mere commodities' and in moments of conflict, the neoliberal state tends to side with the logic of 'good business or investment climate for capitalistic endeavours' than 'the collective rights (and quality of life) of labour or the capacity of the environment to regenerate itself'.[111] In this regard, Bob Jessop classifies three forms of neoliberalism: (a) a project for *radical system transformation* from state socialism to market capitalism (b) a basic *regime shift* within capitalism, particularly in relation to a paradigm shift in accumulation and regulation by introducing new economic and political principles and (c) *policy adjustments* intended to maintain or improve performance of another type of accumulation regime and its mode of regulation.[112] Neoliberalism imposes 'unmediated value relations and class discipline, fragmenting labour and capital and fostering depoliticisation'.[113] Thus, the neoliberal strategy is concerned with depoliticising economy and society by weakening worker's collective organizations.[114]

The above definitions and features of neoliberalism are ideal ones, and there is hardly any sole neoliberal model that follows such prescriptions, which signals that there is a gap between neoliberal theory and practice. In fact, most

[107] Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, 'Neoliberalizing Space', *Antipode*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2002), p. 388.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Brenner and Nik Theodore, 'Cities and the Geographies of "Actually Existing Neoliberalism",' p. 350.

[110] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, pp 24–25.

[111] Ibid, p. 70.

[112] Jessop, 'Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance', pp 452 and 458.

[113] Jamie Gough, 'Neoliberalism and Socialisation in the Contemporary City: Opposites, Complements and Instabilities', *Antipode*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2002), p. 405.

[114] Ibid, p. 410.

states, according to Harvey, which took the 'neoliberal turn', have done so only partially[115] and the effects of neoliberalization in several states have resulted in 'uneven geographical developments'.[116] Although, successive Anglo-American governments have pursued various neoliberal policies right from the 1970s and early 1980s, they could not implement neoliberalism in its totality as certain sectors remained 'immune' to neoliberalization.[117] Besides the Anglo-American model, other models of neoliberalism came to prominence such as those of the Chinese,[118] West German and Japanese, which were emulated by several East and South-East Asian states and were followed by massive financial crises.[119] Then, there are other examples of neoliberalism in practice that got negatively affected by financial crises like Mexico, Argentina, South Korea, Sweden, Brazil, Estonia, Russia, Australia, New Zealand and Turkey.[120]

However, by the mid-1990s, several strands of neoliberalism in practice merged together in the 'Washington Consensus', where the US and UK models of neoliberalism were defined 'as the answer to global problems'.[121] From the late 1990s, the then US President, Bill Clinton, and the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, consolidated neoliberalism, both internationally and in the Anglo-American territory.[122] The formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was the high point of institutional thrust of the Washington Consensus, which set neoliberal guidelines for global economic interaction with 'unhindered capital flow', while safeguarding 'national interests' that effectively facilitated the advanced capitalist economies of Euro-American world and Japan to 'exact tribute from the rest of the world'.[123] In fact, none of these are consistent with neoliberal theory, except for the 'emphasis on budgetary restraints' and the fight against 'inflation'.[124]

However, by the 1990s, the neoliberal project gradually metamorphosed into more 'socially interventionist and ameliorative forms, epitomized by the Third-Way contortions of the Clinton and Blair administrations'.[125] This recent phase of neoliberalism justified 'new forms of institution-building and governmental intervention' without having only a narrow concern with the 'mobilization and

[115] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, p. 87.
[116] Ibid, pp 87–119.
[117] Ibid, p. 88.
[118] Ibid, pp 120–151.
[119] Ibid, pp 87–98.
[120] Ibid, pp 94–115.
[121] Ibid, p. 93.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Peck and Tickell, 'Neoliberalizing Space', pp 388–389.

extension of markets (and market logics)'.[126] Rather, neoliberalism is increasingly associated with the 'political foregrounding of new modes of "social" and penal policy -making, concerned specifically with the aggressive reregulation, disciplining and containment of those marginalized or dispossessed by the neoliberalization of the 1980s'.[127] Thus, the same political formations favouring neoliberalization, which were arguing for 'less government' in the late 1970s and throughout 1980s, were arguing about 'more government' by the 1990s 'to mask and contain the deleterious social consequences, in the lower regions of social space, of the deregulation of wage labour and the deterioration of social protection'.[128] Thus, neoliberalism today is not exclusively marked by the retreat of the state, as was originally thought in the philosophical treatise of Hayek[129] and Friedman[130] or practiced as an 'orthodox, radically anti-statist neoliberalisms of Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s'[131], but it is being currently pursued under the lines of 'socially moderate neoliberalisms'[132] of the UK, the US and Germany during the 1990s with different mechanisms of state/governmental regulations and a deeply 'interventionist agenda' with new discourses of 'reform' or 'welfare dependency'.[133] While neoliberalism was a deregulatory project in the 1970s as a response to the crisis conditions 'external' to the project itself, its recent shifts towards a 'regulatory project' from the 1990s onwards 'were substantially triggered by "internal" contradictions and tensions in the project'.[134] While the centralized planning of erstwhile communist regimes and the bureaucratic forms accompanied with the capitalist societies in the West were both discredited, the conservative and free market-ideological proposal for deregulated market is also problematic. As Laclau argues, 'the automatism of market mechanisms is largely a myth, indeed, state intervention in the regulation of the economy has been greater

[126] Ibid, p. 389.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Loïc Wacquant, 'How Penal Common Sense Comes to Europeans: Notes on the Transatlantic Diffusion of the Neoliberal *Doxa*', *European Societies*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1999), p. 323.

[129] Friedrich August von Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, 1960, with a new introduction by Irwin M. Stelzer (London: Routledge Classics, 2006).

[130] Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom*, [1962 with the assistance of Rose D. Friedman] Fortieth Anniversary, ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

[131] Brenner and Theodore, 'Cities and the Geographies of "Actually Existing Neoliberalism",' p. 362.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Peck and Tickell, 'Neoliberalizing Space', p. 389.

[134] Ibid, p. 390.

under neo-conservative regimes than during the period of the welfare state'.[135] In fact, in recent times, market economy under a neoliberal policy regime that has witnessed a global financial crisis,[136] has responded with active state support for corporate bailouts,[137] corresponded by high degree of unemployment[138] and state budget cuts or austerity drive affecting the people, leading to massive protests in the West.[139]

A critical and genealogical analysis of neoliberalism, by engaging with the academic discourses of the eighteenth century classical liberalism, classical political economy, German ordo-liberalism (Freiburg School), Chicago School Neoliberals in America, and other forms of neoliberalism in Britain and France, is offered by Foucault in his analyses of the inter-relationships between power, governmentality and political economy that reconstituted together to form, what he calls, 'biopolitics'.[140] By following Foucault's concept of neoliberal governmentality as a new art of government, Aihwa Ong does not look at neoliberalism merely as an economic doctrine that seeks to limit the scope of the government and expands the scope of the market with the policy recommendations by various Western governments and international agencies to follow a path of predatory capitalism which has had adverse effects on the Global South. Rather, she tries to offer an alternative view of neoliberalism as a novel and malleable technology of governing that has been adopted by different regimes that are as distinct as authoritarian, democratic or communist in East and Southeast Asian states. By adopting neoliberalism in varied ways, these regimes make exceptions to their usual practices of governing to compete in the global economy.[141]

Combining the political economy, historical and geographical approaches on the Left of Harvey, Moody, Brenner and Theodore, Peck and Tickell, Jessop and Gough, the conceptual framework of Freeden and the genealogical perspective of Foucault, one can sum up the following: (a) Neoliberalism as a contemporary politico-ideological cum continuous politico-economic process

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135 Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, p. 13.

136 Andrew Ross Sorkin, Diana B. Henriques, Edmund L. Andrews and Joe Nocera, 'As Credit Crisis Spiraled, Alarm Led to Action', *The New York Times*, 1 October 2008.

137 Nelson D. Schwartz and James Kanter, 'How many corporate bailouts are too many?', *The New York Times*, 8 September 2008; David Stout, 'The Wall Street Bailout Plan, Explained', *The New York Times*, 20 September 2011.

138 Julia Kollewe and Ashley Seager, 'Sharp rise in unemployment as financial crisis hits jobs market', *The Guardian*, 16 October 2008.

139 'Europe strikes out in austerity drive', *The Economic Times*, 27 September 2010.

140 Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

141 Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (London: Duke University Press, 2006).

known as neoliberalization prefers expansion of global capitalism as a new mode of capitalist accumulation regime, often facilitated by state intervention/regulation of markets, consumer choice and laws. (b) Neoliberalism, built around the core principles of libertarianism is certainly a break/watershed from the ideological discourses of classical liberalism and conservatism in distinct ways. (c) The Neoliberal state generally prioritizes private property rights and tends to favour capital over labour and natural resources. (d) Thus, neoliberalism is a class biased political economy model, in favour of capital that seeks to discipline the working class by thorough hostility towards trade unionism. (e) Neoliberalism depoliticizes economy and society by primarily weakening worker's collective rights and organizations along with fragmenting labour and capital. (f) It is a bio-political project to control bodies/citizens and a project of producing self-centred entrepreneurial individuals. (g) Neoliberalism prefers commoditization of several welfare sectors like education, health and social security, on the one hand, and natural resources on the other, and, thus, seeks to reduce most objects in the world to mere calculable commodities. (h) Neoliberalism is an economic growth-centric project, primarily concerned with fiscal management, without a proper redistribution strategy. (i) Rather than exclusively relying on state planning, neoliberalism prefers a capitalist market economy where individual firms compete (like in a game) with each other within a set of rules determined by the law/state. (j) Neoliberalism is a project of the universalization of capitalism, but when capital is put in difficulty or crisis, it prescribes the strategy of state intervention to bail out capital.

By following the above literature on neoliberalism, I argue that neoliberalism(s) in India and Bangladesh resembles the Western models although it is not a perfect copy of such Western neoliberalism(s), extensively based on the experience of neoliberal academic and politico-economic practice in the Euro-American world. I shall briefly show such peculiar characteristics of neoliberalism, in practice in India and Bangladesh (which also have nuanced differences among them) besides the Islamist responses to such neoliberalization. For now, I argue that although neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh is elite-driven, it has become a consensual practice, enjoying hegemony within the governmental policy framework. I can also argue that neoliberalization in India and Bangladesh is a form of Eurocentrism since it tries to mimic the Euro-American neoliberalism and, thus, ultimately accept the superiority of a Western model of development. To go back to Bhabha, I want to argue that neoliberalism(s) in India and Bangladesh is 'almost the same but not quite/white' like the Euro-American model. It is rather a hybrid; a phenomenon of post-coloniality, where 'hybridity' itself is a 'camouflage'.[142] This is not to forget that successive Indo-Bangladeshi governments actually wanted to carry forward the

[142] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 193.

process of neoliberal reforms like that of Euro-American neoliberalism. This desire to emulate Euro-American neoliberalism is an acknowledgement by successive Indo-Bangladeshi governments that the Euro-American model is the 'best'/'ideal'; otherwise, there would be no question of mimicry. Thus, Indo-Bangladeshi establishment in the contemporary phase of neoliberal reforms argues that it would have been better to completely follow the Euro-American neoliberalism to resolve many problems in society. However, such a desire remains unachievable due to the localized post-colonial distortion of the Euro-American model.

Later in this book, I shall elaborate on neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh, which has its own peculiarities and, thus, is not entirely like the Euro-American model of neoliberalism. Kemalism was a Eurocentric discourse that *mimicked* the Western socio-economic, political and cultural models. Similarly, neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh is another Eurocentric discourse that only *mimics* the Western model in the sphere of political economy. Besides adopting neoliberalism as a dominant paradigm in economic policy-making, cultural ramifications in the name of cultural Westernization at an increasing pace has been witnessed during the phase of neoliberalization from the 1990s onwards in India and Bangladesh, with Euro-American brands dominating the economy;[143] increasing reliance on English education over vernaculars, popularization of globalized media and emergence of a consumerist lifestyle.[144] Apart from economic liberalization and cultural Westernization, pro-Western foreign policies have also been witnessed during the phase of neoliberal reforms in both India and Bangladesh, as one will notice later in this book. The decade of the 1990s saw massive anti-capitalist popular resistance movements in many parts of the globe, targeting 'neoliberalism' as the major rallying point for oppositional mobilization.[145] In this regard, one will notice in subsequent chapters, how neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh has also negatively affected the people and how an Islamist party like Jamaat has taken refuge in populism as a strategy of political mobilization in rallying varied sections of the people against governments, corporations and institutions, which are in favour of such neoliberal policies. This academic exercise cannot be done without clarifying the notion of *people* and *populism*.

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[143] *Indian Brand Equity Foundation Reports,* 2005, available at http://www.ibef.org/artdisplay.aspx?cat_id=391&art_id=4909 accessed on 27 June 2011.

[144] Ruchira Ganguly-Scrase and Timothy J. Scrase, *Globalisation and the Middle Classes in India: The Social and Cultural Impact of Neoliberal Reforms* (London: Routledge, 2009); Dilara Zahid, 'Impact of Cultural Globalization on the Upper Class Youth in Dhaka City: A Sample Study', *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (July 2007).

[145] Brenner and Theodore, 'Cities and the Geographies of "Actually Existing Neoliberalism"', pp 351–352.

People and populism: In this study, I am interested to examine and investigate how far Islamism has been able to mobilize *people* behind its political project. The term 'people' is used in this book as a theoretical concept and is different from the usual meaning in the dominant political discourses that equate it with the 'population' as a whole. The political discourses in India and Bangladesh generally equate 'people' with the notion of 'population'. That is why a special category of 'common people' (*aam aadmi* or *shadharon manush*) within the political discourses in India and Bangladesh is designated for deprived and disadvantaged citizens. In this study, I have used 'people' in the Laclauian sense of 'plebs' or underprivileged.[146] Thus, 'populist claims', 'populism' or 'popular demands' as modes of political articulations by the *people* are not pejoratively used in this study. *Populism* is used here as a *strategy of political mobilization* in which political alliances are constructed 'not along class lines but *beyond* class lines in a constant effort to hegemonize a larger universal task'[147], where the universal task is to challenge the hegemony of the power bloc with a (counter) hegemonic vision of an alternative politico-ideological order. In this study, I must begin with Laclau's incisive proposal to theoretically deal with the concept of 'populism' more than three decades ago: '(P)opular resistance exerts itself against a power external and opposed to "the people", that is to say, *against the very form of the State*, the resolution of the "people"/power bloc contradiction can only consist in the suppression of the state as an antagonistic force with respect to the people'.[148] I shall further elaborate on the concepts of 'people' and 'populism' developed through Laclau's recent writings, while discussing the case studies of Jamaat in India and Bangladesh in this book. For now, I argue that Islamist populism is a strategy of political mobilization with a vision of 'Islamic Alternative' against variants of Eurocentrism, namely post-colonial Eurocentric Kemalism and, subsequently, third-world Neoliberalism, which tries to mimic the hegemonic Euro-American model of neoliberalism. But before explicitly doing such an exercise, it is important to first trace the genealogical debate by the *pundits* on the rise of Islamism as an influential politico-ideological movement in the Muslim world.

Genealogical debate on the rise of Islamism

In this study, I have discussed several academic and journalistic works, not necessarily because they represent overlapping attempts to theorize a particular

[146] Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, p. 81.

[147] Simon Critchley and Oliver Marchart, 'Introduction', in Simon Critchley and Oliver Marchart, eds. *Laclau: A Critical Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 2.

[148] Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, 1977 (London: Verso, 1979), p. 196.

topic in discussion nor are all of them paradigmatic (unless clarified), but to make clear the general discursive terrain on a particular subject. Moreover, given the exhaustive volumes of literature in English on topics related to 'Islamic fundamentalism' and Islamism that have been published from the mid-1980s, with one account showing around 200 books annually,[149] there is no point in summarizing all of them in this book.

In the middle decades of the last century, several strands of secular-nationalist, progressive and even socialist and communist political currents were widely prevalent in significant parts of the Muslim world. These politico-ideological movements as variants of Kemalism came to prominence in an era of third world national liberation movements and decolonization, when the European empires started retreating from various parts of the Muslim world. In fact, Samir Amin argues that barring the Arabian Peninsula and Pakistan, large parts of the Muslim world were strongly marked by political traditions informed by the 'radical currents of modernity' such as the ideas of European Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution and the communism of the Third International, than the parliamentarianism of Westminster.[150] These radical political currents influenced the ruling classes of several Muslim countries to introduce secular-nationalism as a guiding principle of governance.[151] Such a process of modernization in the Muslim world was first introduced under the rule of Mohammed Ali or Khedive Ismail in Egypt, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in Turkey and the Shah of Iran, whose political regimes can be best described as forms of 'enlightened despotism'.[152] Thus, 'national populism' in the Muslim world in the post-war period belongs to the same family of 'modernist political projects', whose variants range from the anti-colonialist Algerian National Liberation Front to the Tunisian Bourguibism, the Egyptian Nasserism, the Baathism of Syria and Iraq as well as the communist regimes of Afghanistan and South Yemen.[153] This trend of Westernized secular-nationalism or Kemalism, whose secular credentials remain unimpeachable to this day[154] was a dominant political discourse in many parts of the Muslim world until it was challenged by the rise of Islamism roughly around the 1970s.

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[149] Yvonne Y. Haddad et al. ed. *The Contemporary Islamic Revival: A Critical Survey and Bibliography* (New York: Greenwood, 1991), p. 9.

[150] Samir Amin, 'Political Islam in the Service of Imperialism', *Analytical Monthly Review*, Vol. 5, No. 9 (December 2007), pp 6–7.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid, p. 7.

[153] Ibid.

[154] Prabhat Patnaik, 'Imperialism and Terrorism', in *The Retreat to Unfreedom: Essays in Emerging World Order* (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2003), pp 106–107.

The contemporary histories of several Muslim countries show how the erstwhile liberal, anti-imperialist, nationalist-secularist, and in some cases socialist governments and movements were either replaced or strongly challenged by Islamist forces. The central Asian region, previously under the influence of the former Soviet Union, is affected by Islamist extremism.[155] Similarly, Iraq had a strong communist party in the 1950s and early 1960s as a prominent opposition force, followed by the rule of secular Ba'th party from the late 1960s onwards for the next three and a half decades.[156] After the American invasion of Iraq, followed by the installation of a puppet government, the only anti-western opposition had been from the Islamist mobilization behind Moqtada Al-Sadr[157] and now the gruesome terrorist network of 'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' (ISIS) [*BBC*, 30 June 2014]. In South Asia, Pakistan also had a nationalist-populist and socialist agenda under the leadership of its former executed Prime Minister, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), in the decade of the 1970s.[158] However, under the tutelage of Zia-ul-Haq's decade long military regime, from the late 1970s to the late 1980s characterized with campaign for Islamization, several Islamist parties including the Jamaat-e-Islami came into prominence in Pakistani politics.[159] While some Islamist parties, like Jamaat-e-Islami and Muslim Brotherhood, were active during the 1940s and the 1950s, it was only from the late 1970s and 1980s onwards that Islamist organizations like Jamaat in South Asia, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria, Hamas of Palestine, the Refah (Welfare Party) of Turkey, Taliban in Afghanistan and Hezbollah in Lebanon became prominent in the political scene of the Muslim world.[160]

In this regard, it is important to note that there is a shared history in the Muslim world of secular-nationalism in the middle decades of the twentieth century, followed by the rise of Islamism from the late 1970s. Then, the question arises as to how one can explain this transformation from a secular-nationalist or Kemalist political discourse to the rise of Islamism in significant parts of the Muslim world. However, before directly addressing such a fundamental question, let us first look at how the existing literature has tried to account for the emergence of Islamism in this respect.

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155 Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: Islamic Militancy in Central Asia* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002).

156 Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 2000, Third Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 2, pp 186–276.

157 Patrick Cockburn, *Muqtada al-Sadr and the Fall of Iraq* (London: Faber, 2008).

158 Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), pp 31–38.

159 Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp 188–198.

160 Robinson, *Islam, South Asia, and the West*, p. 200.

Marxist accounts of entente between imperialism and Islamism: Marxists and other scholars on the Left generally argue that the ascendancy of Islamism is either directly or indirectly linked to imperialism.[161] The Islamists were, in some cases, directly used by American imperialism to crush the progressive regimes in the Muslim world, as in the case of the support given to the Taliban and other Islamist forces by Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Afghanistan.[162] Similarly, Muslim Brotherhood was literally created in the 1920s by the British colonialist and the Egyptian monarchy to block the secular and moderately anti-imperialist Wafd Party, which was in favour of introducing electoral democracy in Egypt in the first half of the twentieth century.[163] The mass return of the Muslim Brotherhood from their refuge in Saudi Arabia after Nasser's death, was organized by the CIA and the then pro-American Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat.[164] The Israelis support to Hamas at the beginning to weaken the secular-democratic nature of Palestinian resistance by the PLO is also well known.[165] In Iran, progressive forces like the Mossadegh's National alliance with the Communists (Tudeh Party) that nationalized Iran's oil resources, were replaced by the installation of the Shah of Iran with a CIA-sponsored coup.[166] The subsequent decimation of Iranian communists and other progressives by the Shah's regime actually created a political void, which was captured by the Islamists in the popular anti-Shah movement, resulting in the overthrow of the American-sponsored monarchy in Iran.[167] In other cases, the US directly imposed CIA-sponsored military coups to eliminate the communists, as in Indonesia and Sudan.[168] In fact, the US initiative to break the 'united front of Asian and African states' set up at the Bandung Conference (1955) to create an 'Islamic Conference', immediately promoted by its allies: Saudi Arabia and Pakistan from 1957, also helped the Islamists to penetrate the political scene of the Muslim world.[169] Similarly,

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161 Prabhat Patnaik, 'Of Finance and Fascism,' in K. N. Panikkar and Sukumar Muralidharan, eds. *Communalism, Civil Society & The State: Reflections On A Decade Of Turbulence* (New Delhi: SAHMAT, 2003), p. 82.

162 Patnaik, 'Imperialism and Terrorism', pp 105–110; Aijaz Ahmad, 'Islam, Islamisms and the West', *Socialist Register*, Vol. 44 (January 2008), pp 1–37; Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004); Amin Saikal, *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp 42–68.

163 Amin, 'Political Islam in the Service of Imperialism', p. 7.

164 Ibid, pp 7–8.

165 Ibid, p. 8.

166 Patnaik, 'Of Finance and Fascism', p. 81.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid.

169 Amin, 'Political Islam in the Service of Imperialism', p. 8.

Mahmood Mamdani demonstrates how Islamism emerged from a modern encounter with Western power, and how the terrorist movement within it arose from the US' post-Vietnam proxy wars. His analysis ranges from the 1960s to the Reaganite–Thatcherite regimes of the 1970s, when a simplistic ideological positioning of the politics of 'good versus evil' began to be espoused.[170]

Failure of the secular-nationalist project in the Muslim world: Another set of arguments complement the above-mentioned Marxist analysis on the rise of Islamism by replacing the causality of imperialism with the causality of the failure of secular-nationalism in the Muslim world. Thus, it argues that Anglo-American imperialism alone was not responsible for the rise of Islamism and, therefore, one cannot locate the emergence of Islamism merely as a fallout of the cold war strategy of the US.[171] Rather, the limits of Westernized secular-nationalist political projects in addressing the developmental issues of poverty, inequality and unemployment have created the possible conditions in which Islamism grew as a significant politico-ideological movement. The frustration of the unrealized hopes and aspirations of the people in the Muslim world were due to the failure of the secular elites along with the failure of both liberal and socialist paths to development, which strengthened the appeal of Islamists.[172] As Mumtaz Ahmad observes, 'by the middle of the twentieth century, secular and modernist thinkers found themselves surpassed by Islamists, at least in terms of the ability to articulate and respond intellectually to popular concerns'.[173]

Islamist response to authoritarianism in the Muslim world: The secular-nationalist projects promoted by several post-colonial regimes in the Muslim world also took recourse in authoritarianism, despotism and repression with a strong state. As a result, there was a lack of democratic political participation in the Muslim world with a corresponding absence of civil society, where the state had intruded into people's lives in systematic and unpredictable ways.[174] The personality cult of several secular-nationalist regimes, the expansion of disciplinary

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[170] Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: Islam, the US, and the Global War Against Terror* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005).

[171] Ibid, p. 14.

[172] Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp 15, 140–141, 171; Alan R. Taylor, *The Islamic Question in Middle-East Politics* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988); Mumtaz Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia: The Jamaat-i-Islami and the Tablighi Jamaat of South Asia', in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Observed* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 462.

[173] Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 461.

[174] Although such intrusions of the state in people's lives were common in the Muslim world, the most notable case was perhaps Baathist Iraq. See Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear: Saddam's Iraq* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), pp 46–72.

techniques by both civilian and military means by those regimes, the question of legitimacy of those regimes, the socio-economic inequalities under them and foreign dependence of those regimes have created conditions in which the mosque emerged as the sole arena of civil society, which the state could not fully control.[175] The Islamic gatherings in the mosques and in several such Islamic institutions became increasingly organized to respond to the authoritarian state.[176]

Result of class contradictions: There are studies, which favour a class analysis of Islamism by demonstrating how Islamism is espoused by only particular classes.[177] Such analyses range from noting the actual class backgrounds of the Islamists to the peculiar support base of Islamist parties to how Islamist movements have used the contradictory class interests in society. Although varied studies have concluded different class bases of Islamism, one notable tendency among such a class analysis is to link Islamism either to the 'crisis of petty bourgeoisie' or an ideology of urban lower middle classes[178], which have not been benefited by the domination of ruling elites in successive post-colonial regimes in the Muslim world.

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[175] Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1990), pp 261–263.

[176] Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, p. 171; Theda Skocpol, 'Reinter state and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian revolution', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (1982), p. 275.

[177] Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State*; Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Misagh Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989); Fred Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation: Religion and Politics in the Middle East* (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1996); Patnaik, 'Of Finance and Fascism'; Chris Harman, *The Prophet and the Proletariat: Islamic Fundamentalism, Class and Revolution* (London: Socialist Workers Party Publication, 1999); Lisa Anderson, 'Fulfilling Prophecies: State Policy and Islamist Radicalism', in John L. Esposito, ed. *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform?* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Reinner, 1997), pp 17–31; Salwa Ismail, 'Being Muslim: Islam, Islamism and Identity Politics', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Autumn 2004), pp 614–631.

[178] Michael M. J. Fischer, 'Islam and the Revolt of the Petite Bourgeoisie', *Daedalus*, Vol. 111, No. 1 (Winter 1982), pp 101–125; Mark Tessler, 'The Origins of Popular Support for Islamist Movements: A Political Economy Analysis', in John P. Entelis, ed. *Islam, Democracy and the State in North Africa* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp 93–126; Eric Davis, 'Ideology, Social Class and Islamic Radicalism in Modern Egypt', in Said Amir Arjomand, ed. *From Nationalism to Revolutionary Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), pp 134–147; Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', pp 496–499; Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam*, p. 261; Parekh, 'The Concept of Fundamentalism', p. 112; David Taylor, 'The Politics of Islam and Islamization in Pakistan', in James P. Piscatori, ed. *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 191.

Migration and petro-dollar financing: Islamism is also seen as a legitimate response to the economic crises of modern times.[179] Thus, a common set of arguments put forward the logic of uneven economic development due to the integration of the Muslim world with world capitalist economy, which led to the migration of poor social groups from rural sites to urban localities while in turn facing unemployment, underemployment and exploitation.[180] Islamism could capture the imagination of these displaced groups because the internal migrants were already familiar with the values and vocabulary of 'folk Islam'. Thus, while encountering 'corruption' or 'evil' in a new urban setting, they could politicize the Islamic metaphors in 'folk Islam' through their lived experiences and, consequently, helped to strengthen the politico-ideological formation of Islamism.[181] Secondly, due to the integration of the Muslim world with world capitalist economy, another set of labour migration took place from poor and populous labour-exporting countries in South Asia and North Africa to oil-rich Muslim states. The spiraling oil prices by OPEC increased the influence of several Muslim oil-exporting countries to finance Muslim institutions to revive the confidence and pride of the *ummah* that ultimately began to promote Islamist projects.[182] Another source of income for the Muslim institutions in the poor labour-exporting countries came from the foreign remittances of the migrant labour, based in oil-exporting Muslim countries. Moreover, fluctuations in the world economy exposed the vulnerability of traditional economic enterprises in the Muslim world. These people had been the supporters of traditional religious networks and it was their opposition to such developments of the global economy and their opposition to integrate with the world economy that took the shape of Islamism.

Islamist response to cultural erosion: A number of academic and journalistic accounts have put forth the argument of how Islamism is an assertive nativist response to the Islamic cultural erosion, as a result of the integration of the Muslim world in a West-led global capitalist system.[183] By following Marx's

[179] Antonie Wessels, 'The So-Called Renaissance of Islam', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3–4 (1984), pp 190–201.

[180] P. J. Vatikiotis, 'Islamic Resurgence', in Alexander S. Cudsi and Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, eds. *Islam and Power* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), p. 193.

[181] John Howe, 'The Crisis of Algerian Nationalism and the Rise of Islamic Integralism', *New Left Review*, Issue 196 (November–December, 1992), pp 85–101; Fischer, 'Islam and the Revolt of the Petite Bourgeoisie', p. 102.

[182] Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 23 and 32; Shireen Hunter, ed. *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism: Diversity and Unity* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp 12–13.

[183] Ayubi, *Political Islam*, pp 217–220; Wessels, 'The So-Called Renaissance of Islam'.

phrase 'time-worn disguises', Fischer argues that Islamism is a reaction against cultural erosion.[184] Some authors make repeated references to argue how the erosion of Islamic cultural identities creates the possible conditions for the rise of Islamism.[185] In fact, the Islamists themselves have assertively responded to the incursions of Western cultural and ideological influences on Muslim societies.[186]

Islamist response to colonial and post-colonial modernity: Another set of arguments locate Islamism as a response/reaction to Western modernity as imposed by colonial and post-colonial regimes. Mumtaz Ahmad, in this context, argues that the rise of Islamism is often described 'as a reaction against the kind of modernizing policies pursued by the secular-minded political elite of Muslim societies in the recent past'.[187] Some have portrayed Islamism as having a monolithic character from the 1930s to the 1990s, and showing a significant departure from both the discourses of Islamic modernism in the second half of the nineteenth century up to the early twentieth century, and liberal nationalism from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, due to its stubborn opposition to both modernism and nationalism that preceded it, in many Muslim societies.[188] Islamism is also seen as 'a particular ideology of opposition to the Technical Age, or more recently, the High-Tech Era. The common object of their revulsion is the modernist hegemony'.[189] Some also see Islamism as a 'defensive' cultural reaction to rapid social change.[190] It is also seen as a 'semi-modern, backward-oriented utopia contesting cultural modernity'[191] in which the concept of an Islamic state becomes the 'nucleus of an Islamic world order'[192] that challenges global secularization with an alternative vision of 'a divine global order'.[193] Therefore, Islamism is an 'expression of a revolt against the West'[194] and is another form

184 Fischer, 'Islam and the Revolt of the Petite Bourgeoisie', p. 101.

185 Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam*; Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, pp 50–75.

186 Maududi, *Nations: Rise and Fall Why?*; Maududi, *Our Message*; Maududi, *The Question of Dress*; Maududi, *The Sick Nations of the Modern Age*; Maududi, *West versus Islam*.

187 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 509.

188 Mansoor Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

189 Lawrence, *Defenders of God*, p. 229.

190 Bassam Tibi, *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change*, trans. Clare Krojzl (Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1990).

191 Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 68.

192 Ibid, p. 99.

193 Ibid, p. 104.

194 Ibid, p. 89.

of universalism, like that of the Western civilization, and since both the West and Islam are universal, the clash between Islam and the West is inevitable and more evident than any other competing civilizations.[195]

Anti-modernism of Islamism often overlaps with anti-Westernism. Thus, Islamist organizations 'became popular because they offered an authentic Islamic cultural identity during a period of Muslim identity crisis, and they effectively articulated in Islamic idioms the socio-economic and political concerns of social strata that fared poorly in the newly emerging world of modernity'.[196] Therefore, Mamdani points out that Islamism 'is more a domestic product than a foreign import. But neither was bred in isolation; both were produced in the encounter with Western power. Islamism was born in the colonial period. But it did not give rise to a terrorist movement until the Cold War'.[197] A similar trajectory of Islamism with its genealogy rooted in the colonial period can be traced throughout Youssef M. Choueiri's work that portrays a historical and analytical survey of eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, within the folds of three distinctive movements, namely *Islamic Revivalism*, *Islamic Reformism* (Islamic modernism) and *Islamic Radicalism*.[198]

Choueiri's study treated each movement 'as a distinct entity with its own historical genesis, socio-economic environment and conceptual frame of reference'.[199] According to Choueiri, Islamic revivalism was confined to peripheral areas lying beyond the reach of central authorities, while its social basis had a predominant tribal formation. The movement's first and perhaps most celebrated manifestation occurred under the guidance of religious leaders and local chiefs just as it did in the case of Wahabi movement. The Faraizi movement in Bengal and the Barelvi movement in north-west India are in the same league of revivalist Islam. These movements coincided with the colonial struggle against the *foreign infidels,* while the mass mobilization against colonial exploitation and domination was made in the name of Islam. The eighteenth century witnessed a proliferation of Muslim revivalist movements responding quite distinctively to various financial, demographic and agricultural crises. Some of these movements were internal, but they were complicated by European intrusions/colonization/control of most of the Muslim world. Thus, Islamic revivalist movements were very much a reaction/protest against European colonialism. According to Choueiri, Mahdist uprising in Sudan, Umar Tal's movement in Nigeria that

[195] Ibid, p. 15.

[196] Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 462.

[197] Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, p. 14.

[198] Youssef M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1990).

[199] Ibid, p. 9.

later spread to Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Chad, and Padri puritanical movement in Sumatra are also examples of Islamic revivalism.[200]

Islamic reformism, by contrast, argues Choueiri, was an urbane movement that came into being in the nineteenth century and lasted well until the twentieth century. Its leaders were state officials, intellectuals or those *ulama* that were fiercely opposed to traditional interpretations of Islam. It conducted an open dialogue with European cultures and philosophies in an attempt to grapple with what it perceived to be an intolerable state of Islamic decline.[201] The period of external challenges of European colonialism and imperialism and a reaction to colonialism and internal disintegration, were followed by a peculiar form of secular nationalism in the Muslim societies, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century up until the middle decades of the last century, in the form of Islamic reformism. This was a period of Western adaptation when Muslim societies sought a place in the emerging modern world by adapting to the Western concepts and institutions often imposed by the Westernized Muslim political elites, such as independent nation–state, Western education and modern political structures. Therefore, the Muslim world, during this phase, not only endorsed the processes of modernity but also was subjected to the ideology of modernism.[202]

Choueiri further argues that by the middle of the twentieth century, both revivalism and reformism were superseded by the emergence of sovereign nation–states throughout the Islamic world. These states carried out varied programmes of development and relegated Islam to a personal sphere or subordinated its fundamental tenets to the requirements of politico-economic interests. The course of this new phenomenon spreads across the phase of Islamic radicalism to a post-Khilafat history. Therefore, Islamic radicalism is primarily seen by Choueiri as a direct reaction to the growth of the nation–state and its peculiar problems and closely related to the anxieties and ambitions of particular constituencies like recent rural migrants to urban centres and the social strata of small merchants, small shopkeepers, middle traders, artisans, students, teachers and state employees.[203]

However, the nineteenth and twentieth century Islamic modernism/reformism that tried to *catch up* with the West through a synthesis of Islamic symbolism and borrowed Western ideas of Enlightenment and European rationality, later converged with the elitist project of Western modernity in the shape of Kemalism in the post-colonial period. Such a Kemalist project eventually failed to address

[200] Ibid, Chapter 1.
[201] Ibid, p. 9.
[202] Ibid, Chapters 2, 3 and 4.
[203] Ibid, pp 10 and 12 and Chapters 5 and 6.

certain fundamental issues of the Muslim societies. As a result, a sense of alienation towards Kemalist experiments among the Muslim masses can be seen. The disillusionment of Muslim societies with secular–nationalist–socialist regimes was followed by an Islamist reaction producing hatred towards Western modernity that was being mimicked by the erstwhile Kemalist elites. Thus, Sayyid argues that Kemalism, as a metaphor of Eurocentrism, encountered a political crisis of Western modernity in the Muslim world, while Islamism rose in this particular context of such a crisis of Eurocentrism.[204] Moreover, the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979 became a morale booster for future Islamist movements to believe that an Islamic state in the contemporary world is very much possible without opting for the Western way of either the liberal democratic or the socialist state.[205] At the same time, the positive role played by Islamists in charity and social welfare has also enhanced their political acceptance and credibility, like in Palestine.[206]

Rise of Islamism in the Muslim world: A critical evaluation

If one critically examines the existing literature that has so far been narrated, then it specifically argues the following points. Firstly, the rise of Islamism in the Muslim world is due to the US-funded counter-revolutions, orchestrated by military coups in some countries and Islamists in other. Secondly, the limits of secular-nationalist political projects under the auspices of Kemalism in resolving the socio-economic and political crises of the Muslim world, led to Islamism. Thirdly, Islamism arose as a reaction to the authoritative structures in the Muslim world due to a lack of democratic political participation of the people in the political process. Fourthly, Islamism emerged as a political discourse by specifically appealing to certain segments of the population, particularly the petty-bourgeoisie. Fifthly, Islamism is a discontented response to the uneven economic development in an increasingly integrating world economy, in which the funding of Islamist movements came via petro-dollar regimes. Sixthly, Islamism is a nativist cultural response to the 'cultural erosion' identified by the Islamists as a result of Western-led global capitalist system. Finally, Islamism first rose as a reaction to colonial modernity and later as a response to post-colonial modernity. However, all these happened when the credibility and legitimacy of several Kemalist regimes were questioned.

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[204] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear.*

[205] Ibid, p. 89.

[206] Tariq Ali, 'Editorial: Mid-Point in the Middle East', *New Left Review*, No. 38 (March-April, 2006), p. 7.

Thus, the summing up of the above-mentioned narratives accounting for the rise of Islamism within the logic of the failure of Kemalism can be as follows. The Kemalist experiment in the Muslim world, with Westernized models of development like market capitalism or socialism, failed to adequately address the democratic demands of the people, which were of socio-economic and political nature. The Kemalist project was more of a fantasy of the ruling elites that was imposed from above than a hegemonic formation with popular support from below. Thus, the *people* in the Muslim world eventually became disillusioned with Kemalism, and by the 1970s, the attraction towards Islamism as an ideology of political protest against Westernized elites in Muslim societies became evident. Apart from such narratives, one can also add that the emergence of Islamism in the contemporary world also converged with the emergence of identity-based movements, the rise of neoliberalism and the retreat of the welfare state, the starting point of crisis for socialism and secularism in the Muslim world, and a decline of organized working class politics in most parts of the world.

However, can all these sufficiently explain the rise of Islamism? One can argue that the above-mentioned narratives can certainly explain the crisis of Kemalism in the Muslim world. The various events that marked such a crisis of Kemalism also created the condition of possibilities for an alternative political articulation as a protest discourse against the ruling power bloc. However, the question arises as to why such a protest discourse as a counter-hegemonic political discourse turned out to be Islamist and not of any other political discourse like liberalism or Marxism or social-democracy in the Muslim world. The above-mentioned narratives on the genealogical debate about the rise of Islamism in the Muslim world, thus, offer us only a negative logic for accounting Islamism. However, for a winning political discourse, it also has to be positive, offering/promising something *better* than the existing political discourses. Kemalism as a hybrid of Eurocentrism and localized distortions in mimicking the Euro-American world, besides being discredited, has already articulated varied strands of liberalism, Marxism and social-democracy. Thus, any exclusive liberal, Marxist and social–democratic project would have faced difficulty in articulating the discontents emerging out of such a discredited Kemalist project, although such exclusive experiments were not impossible in a post-Kemalist Muslim world. Thus, how can one explain the emergence of Islamism as a result of crisis of Eurocentrism/Kemalism? To this question, one argues that Islamism could emerge only at the expense of the erosion of Eurocentrism/Kemalism but, to be successful as a counter-hegemonic discourse against repetitions of Kemalist projects, it would

have to construct Islam as a 'master signifier' of a new political order.[207] Secondly, it had to adopt a Khomeinian strategy of complete disengagement with Western projects, by ignoring the West while providing a non-Western political project along with rejecting the Muslim apologist discourses, which were defensive in their attitudes by trying to reinscribe the achievements of Western modernity as being originally found in Islam.[208] In contrast to the emergence of Islamism as a counter-hegemonic force against Kemalism, in this book, I am going to tell the story of why and how Islamism *could not* benefit from the problems of the Euro-American model of neoliberalism that is being mimicked in both India and Bangladesh, and the Mujibist mimicry of Kemalism in Bangladesh. This inability of the Islamist project to become a counter-hegemonic force in India and Bangladesh precisely exposes its *limits* in offering an 'alternative' politico-ideological order.

Therefore, in this book, firstly, I try to explain why and how Islamism responds in a peculiar fashion to the hybrid model of neoliberalism in both India and Bangladesh. Secondly, I demonstrate why and how Islamism is unable to become a counter-hegemonic force in resisting such projects in India and Bangladesh. Thirdly, I show why and how Islamism reacts in a particular way to Mujibism in Bangladesh. Fourthly, I am also interested in seeing the nature of difficulties that Islamism faces in responding to neoliberalism and Mujibism, and how it remains just another critical discourse among many against such projects. Finally, by specifically studying the ideological articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh, I look at the nature of *decontestation* and what I call *recontestation* in the ongoing process of fixing and changing the meanings of certain important political concepts within the ideological vocabulary of *Jamaati Islamism*.

Existing categories of analysis

There are several analytical vantage points in classifying myriad Islamist movements.[209] Salwa Ismail discusses three distinct academic approaches to study Islamism.[210] First, what she calls the approach of 'Historical Master-narratives' primarily associated with

[207] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, pp 45-49.

[208] Ibid, pp 89-98; pp 103-104; pp 113-115; pp 129-131.

[209] Masoud Kazemzadeh, 'Teaching the Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism', *Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (March 1998), pp 52-59; Salwa Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State and Islamism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), pp 1-26.

[210] Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*.

two works by John L. Esposito[211] and John O. Voll.[212] Ismail's criticism of the works of both Esposito and Voll is linked to the general critique of 'Islamic essentialism' that explains Islamist movements in 'a unitary understanding of the religion' with an idea of Islamic totality where all Muslims share a certain commonality in terms of basic beliefs, and in which specific socio-political contexts have been given lesser weightage in analyzing various Islamist movements.[213]

The second pole of analysis is around sociological and political economy approaches.[214] According to Ismail, sociological analyses interpret Islamist action in terms of the social backgrounds of actors in relation to their socio-psychological states. This approach examines: 'social characteristics of Islamist activists, sketching a profile of group membership in terms of age, education and family conditions. This profile is set against a background of rapid social transformation marked by industrialization, urbanization and so on. Within this perspective, Islamist activism is understood as the expression of frustrated aspirations. Concepts such as uprootedness, disenchantment and disintegration are deployed to account for the socio-psychological states that lie behind decisions to join Islamist groups and to become active in them'.[215] The political economy approach also shares several concerns of the sociological analyses like the 'frustrated aspirations among the youth and members of the middle classes' and, in addition, assigns Islamism 'an expression of class interests'.[216] Political economy analysis is dependent on economic and political conditions that favour the rise of Islamist political groups and, thus, is often acknowledged as an alternative to culturalist interpretations because of its emphasis on structural and institutional contexts over cultural factors.[217] Class analysis of Islamism with regard to the peculiar class constituents of various Islamist movements, is part of sociological and political economy approaches.

Ismail classifies Islamists into militants, conservatives and moderates with specific social origins and particular modes of political action.[218] According

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[211] John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* 3rd edn. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991).

[212] John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* 2nd edn. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

[213] Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, pp 4-11.

[214] In this group Ismail categorizes the following works: Tessler, 'The Origins of Popular Support for Islamist Movements'; Davis, 'Ideology, Social Class and Islamic Radicalism in Modern Egypt'; Fischer, 'Islam and the Revolt of the Petite Bourgeoisie'; Ayubi, *Political Islam*; Anderson, 'Fulfilling Prophecies'.

[215] Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, p. 11.

[216] Ibid, pp 12–13.

[217] Ibid, pp 13–15.

[218] See Salwa Ismail, 'Being Muslim: Islam, Islamism and Identity Politics', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (Autumn 2004), pp 614–631.

to her, 'militants originate from lower-middle-class backgrounds. They have social and economic concerns at the heart of their agenda and [use] violence as a means of action. Conservatives and moderates belong to the middle classes with professionals as their main supporters. Conservatives focus on morality issues and seek the Islamization of society and state institutions but not a take-over of political power. Moderates attempt to work within the institutional channels of participation'.[219] However, sociological and political economy approaches have been criticized by Ismail because of their focus on macro-concerns at the cost of micro-level changes in everyday life, appended by a total negation of cultural practices and cultural production in analyzing Islamism.[220]

The third approach to Islamism, Ismail observes, is that of historical, historicizing and critical anthropological approaches, which by following Talal Asad, treats Islam as a 'discursive tradition'.[221] Here, Muslim discourses and actors are historically situated and the scripture is not claimed as a homogenous entity, since its interpretation is contested by various actors and in specific by historical contexts; and that meanings and actions in Muslim societies largely depend on power relations between institutions and actors.[222] Therefore, due to the variety of interpretations of texts in different contexts, the multiplicity of Muslim discourses has to be accounted for in relation to varied degrees of power positions.[223] Despite its emphasis on specificity and local-level actors, culturalist approaches have been subjected to criticisms as being 'ahistorical' and their 'construction of Islam as an analytical category', is often treated 'as a coherent sociological and political entity'.[224] In contrast to culturalist interpretations of Islam [is seen] as a unitary socio-political constant, Ismail offers, what she calls an integrated approach of comparative-historical and interpretative understanding of contemporary Islamist movements, by rejecting the tendency of generalizations of essentialist approaches and adopting a micro-analysis combined with specificity of various contexts, socio-cultural practices of everyday life, and macro-level changes in social conditions.[225]

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[219] Ibid, pp 615–616.

[220] Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, pp 14–16.

[221] See Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam* (Washington DC: Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1986).

[222] Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, pp 16–17.

[223] Ibid, p. 17. For detailed exposition on the issue of culturalist and critical anthropological approaches to Islamism see Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[224] Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, p. 16.

[225] Ibid, pp 22–25.

There are other scholars who have also classified three principal poles of analysis in reading Islamism: (1) Islamic exceptionalism (2) Comparative fundamentalisms and (3) Class Analysis.[226] Islamic exceptionalists believe that the uniqueness of 'Islamic fundamentalism' and the Islamic world cannot be understood by applying Western theories of social sciences. In other words, the Islamic world is seen as something entirely different from the rest of the world in general, and with respect to the Western world in particular. Islamic exceptionalists argue that Islam constitutes a set of clearly defined and unchanging principles and this essentialist conception about Islam is combined with the Islamist assertion that Islam is not simply a religion but a comprehensive way of life. Moreover, this ahistorical and essentialist Islam is regarded as an independent variable determining the behaviours of both the rulers and the ruled in Muslim societies. Thus, Islamic exceptionalism buys the essentialist argument of Islamism, without locating the contradictions and contestations between classes in Muslim societies. In doing so, it presents a concept of homogenous Islamism. According to Kazemzadeh, Islamic exceptionalists can be divided into three subgroups of (a) cultural relativists, (b) neo-Cold warriors and (c) Islamic fundamentalists.[227] Cultural relativists generally avoid using the term 'fundamentalist' because they view the latest resurgence of Islamist movements from the 1970s onwards, as emanating from a cyclical phenomenon throughout Islamic history. Instead, they refer to these movements as 'Islamist,' or 'political Islam' and tend to view Islam and Islamist movements in a positive light like in the works of Esposito.[228] Some of them, who are deeply concerned with the widespread negative prejudice against Islam and Muslims in the West, dismiss much of the antidemocratic, misogynist, and atavistic policies of the Islamists as arising from either cultural differences or the temporary excesses of a few extremists.[229]

However, most Western scholars who subscribe to the paradigm of Islamic exceptionalism fall into the second subgroup of neo-Cold warriors representing a negative view of Islamic movements. According to Kazemzadeh, 'they argue that the roots of dictatorship and repression of dissent in Islamic countries lie

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[226] See Masoud Kazemzadeh, 'Teaching the Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism', *Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (March 1998), pp 52–59.

[227] Ibid, p. 52.

[228] John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984); *Islam: The Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); John L. Esposito, ed. *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[229] Saeed Rahnema and Sohrab Behdad, 'Introduction: Crisis of an Islamic State', in Saeed Rahnema and Sohrab Behdad, eds. *Iran after the Revolution: Crisis of an Islamic State* (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1995).

in Islamic faith and that Islamic fundamentalism is primarily a more assertive and political form of the Islamic faith'.[230] In this regard, while Myron Weiner and Samuel Huntington do not make careful distinctions between Islam as a faith and 'Islamism' as a political ideology,[231] Daniel Pipes makes a difficult distinction in this regard, before making the point that Islamism is definitely a threat to the West.[232] Some rightly call this group of scholars 'Orientalist' and 'neo-Orientalist'.[233]

The third subgroup among the Islamic exceptionalists is that of 'Islamists' themselves, as per Kazemzadeh.[234] According to the group of Islamists, Islamic state and government is the most ideal and perfect system because it is based on the divine law, which is superior to any other man-made laws or ideologies. There is a considerable body of Islamic literature on the issues of human rights and democracy, asserting that democracy has always been the cornerstone of Islam as, according to them, this was the first religion which made democracy an ineluctable part of faith. This Islamist literature claims that, unlike the Western notions of democracy which rests on the sovereignty of the people, 'Islamic democracy' rests on the sovereignty of God as it is the right of the divine power to rule over its subjects (people) as God is the creator of this universe. It also argues that Islam is opposed to hereditary rule and there is an old tradition of republicanism as expressed in the concept of *Khalifa*.[235] The Islamists believe that man-made ideologies and legal structures are completely incapable of solving the entire problems of human civilizations. They question the whole modernity project of Western enlightenment and rationality by describing it as 'the rule of *Jahiliya* (ignorance)' that should be replaced with *Nizam-e-Islami* (rule of Islam) as per Sayyid Qutb[236] and Maulana Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi[237], the two most important thinkers of the *Sunni* brand of Islamism.

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[230] Kazemzadeh, 'Teaching the Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 53.

[231] Myron Weiner, 'Political Change: Asia, Africa and the Middle East', in Myron Weiner and Samuel P. Huntington, eds. *Understanding Political Development* (Boston: Little Brown & Company), pp 33-64; Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilisations?', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (1993), pp 22–49.

[232] Daniel Pipes, 'Political Islam Is a Threat to the West', in Paul A. Winters, ed. *Islam: Opposing Viewpoints* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1995).

[233] Yahya Sadowski, 'The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate', *Middle East Report*, No. 183 (July–August 1993), pp 14–21.

[234] Kazemzadeh, 'Teaching the Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 53.

[235] Maududi, *Political Theory of Islam*.

[236] Qutb, *Milestones*.

[237] Maududi, *Islam and Ignorance*.

Scholars working within the second paradigm of 'comparative fundamentalisms', view the rise of Islamic movements in the past three decades as a part of a larger process of a global phenomenon of the rise of global rightwing religious movements. This paradigm uses social scientific theories to compare and contrast various groups among the religious right.[238] The 'Fundamentalism Project' conducted under the auspices of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, propounded the paradigm of 'comparative fundamentalisms'. As a result of this effort, five encyclopaedic volumes were published.[239] The Fundamentalism Project's major contributions include (a) providing intra-paradigmatic agreed-upon terminology and definitions, (b) adopting a rigorous comparative methodology, and (c) presenting generalizations which may be refuted by further research across various fundamentalisms or in a single case, qualitatively or quantitatively.[240] As far as the theoretical and ideological positions of scholars classified under the typology of 'comparative fundamentalisms' are concerned, this school tends to regard various religious right movements as threats to democracy, civil liberties, women's rights, secular life and scientific progress. Most proponents and subscribers of 'comparative fundamentalism' come from mainstream academia with moderate-liberal views.

Scholars, who according to Kazemzadeh, adopt the third paradigm of *Class Analysis*, 'view Islamic fundamentalism as primarily a political movement among certain social classes to achieve political power for use in the interest of these classes'.[241] Unlike the scholars working within the first paradigm of 'Islamic exceptionalism', who consider socio-economic class as a Western construct inapplicable to the Islamic world, and unlike the scholars in the second paradigm of 'comparative fundamentalisms', who rarely use class analysis, the scholars embracing the third paradigm, pay a great deal of attention to class and class struggle as primary explanatory factors in the rise of Islamism. In this regard, fundamentalism in general and Islamic radicalism in particular, have been linked with an ideology of urban lower middle classes 'reacting against social

[238] For example: R. Scott Appleby, ed. *Spokesmen for the Despised: Fundamentalist Leaders of the Middle East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Marty and Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Vol. 1 of the *Fundamentalism Project*.

[239] Marty and Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Vol. 1; *Fundamentalisms and Society*, Vol. 2; *Fundamentalisms and the State*, Vol. 3; *Accounting for Fundamentalisms*, Vol. 4; *Fundamentalisms Comprehended*, Vol. 5.

[240] Kazemzadeh, 'Teaching the Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 54.

[241] Ibid, pp 54–55.

deprivation at the hands of the upper social classes and government bureaucrats, on the one hand, and against the increasing militancy of the lower classes, on the other'.[242] Similarly, Samir Amin has argued that Islamists do not question 'the hegemonic bloc formed by the military, the religious leaders and the comprador bourgeoisie'[243] that can be witnessed in several Muslim countries. Chris Harman talks about four different class bases of Islamism[244]: (a) *Islamism of the old exploiters,* comprising 'landowners (including clergy-dependent incomes from land belonging to religious foundations), traditional merchant capitalists and the owners of the mass of small shops and workshops', as seen in Iran and Algeria. (b) *Islamism of the new exploiters,* often emerging from the old exploiters like certain capitalists who were opposed to the state and, thus, had backed the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the middle-sized capital's support to Islamic Welfare Party (Refah Party) in Turkey, and the *bazaari's* support for Khomeini in Iran. (c) *Islamism of the poor,* comprising significant sections among the peasantry and rural migrants in the cities of Algeria and Iran, and (d) *Islamism of the new middle class,* comprising significant sections among the professionals, teachers, government employees, university students, employees of the Islamic financial sector, etc. in Iran, Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Sudan.

Finally, there are many works that cannot be just situated within the trichotomy discussed above. Nonetheless, these three schools are the major paradigms in analyzing the nature of Islamism in the contemporary period. Thus, other works that cannot be situated clearly within one of the three official paradigms of reading Islamism, can be viewed as 'hybrid studies' that 'combine various aspects of the main paradigms'.[245] Dekmejian's study that uses Western social scientific theories associated with 'comparative fundamentalisms', but operates within assumptions and conclusions that are similar to the cultural relativists, can be an example of such a hybrid study.[246] In another insightful study, Fred Halliday combines approaches taken from the schools of 'comparative fundamentalisms' and 'class analysis' to find strikingly ideological similarities among 'fundamentalists' in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, without ascribing identical social bases to them.[247]

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[242] Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 496.

[243] Amin, *Eurocentrsim*, p. 74.

[244] Harman, *The Prophet and the Proletariat*.

[245] Kazemzadeh, 'Teaching the Politics of Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 55.

[246] R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985).

[247] Fred Halliday, 'The Iranian Revolution and Its Implications,' *New Left Review*, No. 166 (November–December 1987), pp 29–37.

Orientalism, anti-Orientalism and Western (post) modernity: Apart from the above-mentioned themes that have studied Islamism in quite different ways, an important conflict is between the two major camps of Orientalists and anti-Orientalists to study Islamism in relation to 'Western' modernity and postmodernity. The Orientalist view regards Islam(ism) as fundamentally opposed to the West and treats it as a *demon* or a 'threat' to the West.[248] In this respect, Esposito demonstrates that the mythical notion of an 'Islamic threat' in the West is a continuation of an old form of Orientalism that was prevalent in the West. He argues that Islamism as a new threat to the West in the 1990s replaced communism as an enemy of the West during the Cold War within the discourses of mainstream Western academia and policy-makers that constructed a new myth of an impending confrontation between Islam and the West by presenting a historical pattern of Muslim belligerency and aggression, while referring to crusades and fourteen centuries of warfare between Islam and the West.[249] Both the Orientalist and neo-Orientalist constructions of Islamism as incompatible with 'modernity', package and label Islamism into a single, homogenous, essentialist and unitary category of a 'fundamentalist' phenomenon without acknowledging the multiplicity of Islamist groups in their varied contexts, diverse ideological articulations and political actions. The Orientalist discourses, which were describing the medieval dominance of Islamic world as 'dark ages' also produced a visible phenomenon of 'Islamophobia' right from the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth and twenty-first century, continuously reproduced articulations in media caricatures and stereotyped political cartoons.[250]

In response to the Orientalist discourses on Islam, scholars who are opposed to the very Orientalist formulations of 'Islamic threat' describe the dominant Western characterizations of Islam itself, as a form of *threat*, particularly, how mainstream Western strategic and political commentators perceive modern-day Islam or, at least, how they *present* it, and how the popular Western perception

[248] See the following works: Pipes, 'Political Islam Is a Threat to the West'; Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996); Weiner, 'Political Change: Asia, Africa, and the Middle East'; Zachary Karabell, 'Fundamental Misconceptions: Islamic Foreign Policy', *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 105 (Winter 1996–97), pp 77–90; Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Francis Fukuyama and Nadav Samin, 'Can Any Good Come of Radical Islam', *Commentary*, Vol. 114, No. 2 (September 2002), pp 34–39.

[249] John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* 1992, Third edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[250] Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg, *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008).

of Islam is misleading.[251] Thus, Mahmood Mamdani dispels the notion of 'good' (secular and Westernized) Muslims as against 'bad' (pre-modern, fanatic) Muslims.[252] He argues that such simple judgements based on the construction of binary opposites emerge out of a certain brand of politics rather than from any cultural or religious identity. In this regard, the notion of Islamism in the postcolonial era 'is continuous with previous colonial constructions of a Muslim Other, which works to legitimize unequal relations between different geopolitical locations. The prejudicial view of Muslims as backward and fanatical is complicit with the old colonial discourses and the new global regimes of power and knowledge'.[253] As a result, for both Orientalist and neo-Orientalist discourses, the singular, essentialist and unchanging Islamism 'appear[s] as a natural threat to the so-called modern West'.[254] Said has argued how the Orientalist characterization of Islamism as a threat to the West is largely a discourse that was produced by mainstream American academia and journalism in search of a new 'manufactured enemy' in the post-Soviet new world order to suit the imperial interests of American establishment in the post-Cold-War period.[255]

The anti-Orientalist view regards Islamism as a 'protest ideology' that articulates political resistance to the postcolonial order.[256] In formulating Islamism as a protest ideology, a group of scholars within the theoretical framework of postmodernism/poststructuralism, highlights the Islamist challenge to the 'West' as an ethico-political critique of post-Enlightenment political projects of liberalism, nationalism, socialism and Marxism that were founded on the principles of Western rationalism and segregation of religious authority from the realm of politics.[257] Here, I do not generalize that all postmoderns/poststructuralists hail Islamism as a protest ideology, but find it fair to say that much of this literature treats Islamism as a protest ideology.

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[251] Jochen Hippler and Andrea Lueg, eds. *The Next Threat: Western Perceptions of Islam* (London: Pluto Press, 1995).

[252] Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*.

[253] Minoo Moallem, 'Cultural Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Case of Iran', in Vasant Kaiwar and Sucheta Mazumdar, eds. *Antinomies of Modernity: Essays on Race, Orient, Nation* (London: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 198.

[254] Ibid, p. 197.

[255] Edward W. Said, 'The Campaign Against "Islamic Terror"', in *The End Of The Peace Process: Oslo And After* (London: Granta Books, 2000), pp 44–50.

[256] Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (London: Verso, 2003), p. 45

[257] For example: Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*; Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror*; Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror.*

There are, however, some scholars who posit a much nuanced and complex relationship between Islamism, modernity and postmodernity. Some regard Islamism 'as a reaction against modernity, but more profoundly an expression of modernity'[258], while others argue that it is a product of modernization rather than a reaction against it.[259] In this regard, Bruce Lawrence argues that 'antimodernism' is not the sole motive of 'fundamentalist groups' rather, 'the core contest is between two incommensurate ways of viewing the world, one which locates values in timeless scriptures, inviolate laws and unchanging mores, the other which sees in the expansion of scientific knowledge a technological transformation of society that pluralizes options both for learning and for living'.[260]

Like Islamism, since postmodernism is also opposed to the instrumental rationalism of both capitalism and communism, there could be an alliance between Islam and postmodernism, according to Akbar Ahmed. But at the same time, Ahmed proposes that Islamism is also a reaction against postmodernity as it faces cultural threats from postmodern icons like Madonna, Tina Turner, Coca-Cola and McDonald's; a thesis which is also shared by a host of other scholars.[261] In this regard, Islamism is viewed as an attempt to carve out a strategy of living in a postmodern world of radical doubt, that questions the very basis of belief systems.[262] In putting forward the arguments of Muslim responses to the age of postmodernity across the Islamic world, scholars have particularly given more importance to the global media, new technologies like Television and VCR that influenced the traditional Muslim beliefs and culture, and subsequently, with the rise of 'Muslim issues', led to a polarization between radical Islam and the West, both in Islamic and Western societies.[263] From an anti-orientalist viewpoint, scholars are also interested in the biased Western

[258] Ira M. Lapidus, 'Islamic Revival and Modernity: The Contemporary Movements and the Historical Paradigms', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 40, No. 4 (1997), p. 444.

[259] Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 50.

[260] Lawrence, *Defenders of God*, p. 232.

[261] Akbar S. Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise* (London: Routledge, 1992); Bryan S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994); Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992); Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad Versus Mcworld* (New York: Times Books, 1995).

[262] Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam*, p. 13.

[263] Akbar S. Ahmed and Hastings Donnan, eds. *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1994).

discursive formulations effectively expressed in the mythical and stereotypical representations of Islam in the Western media.[264]

The success of many Islamist movements in opposing the West has, in fact, been quite encouraging for the postmoderns themselves. Michel Foucault's defence of Iran's Islamic revolt can be seen as one of the most distinguished postmodern enthusiasms for Shiite variety of Islamism.[265] From the reference point of Western modernity, a poststructuralist reading of Islamism is seen not as an anti-modern movement; rather, it is an effort to displace the West from the position of centrality that it claims while being able to articulate the 'deconstructionist logic' of the 'postmodern critique of modernity'.[266] Thus, some poststructuralists hail Islamism as a culturally authentic critique of the 'West' from a non-Western location.[267] Many of the critical readings within Western academia in line with postmodernism label the modernist discourse of the West as a meta-narrative, asserting Western hegemony. Similar to such postmodern concerns, the anti-Western position of Islamism is regarded as a negation of both Western hegemony and the meta-narrative that sustains it.[268]

A poststructuralist reading of Islamism argues that the rise of Islamism is a result of the 'limits'/'crisis' of the Eurocentric/Westernized 'Kemalist' project/discourses in the post-colonial Muslim world.[269] By relying on Sayyid's work, Susan Buck-Morss argues that Islamism 'as a counter-hegemonic discursive

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[264] Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); Malise Ruthven, 'Islam in the Media', in Hastings Donnan, ed. *Interpreting Islam* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), pp 51–75; Patrick Martin and Sean Phelan, 'Representing Islam in the Wake of September 11: A Comparison of US Television and CNN Online Message board Discourses', *Promestheus*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (September 2002), pp 263–269.

[265] Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp 284–289; Michel Foucault and Baqir Parham, 'On Marx, Islam, Christianity and Revolution', *Deadalus*, Vol. 134, No. 1 (Winter 2005), pp 126–132; Michel Foucault, 'Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirit', in Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977–1984*, trans. Alan Sheridan and others, ed. with an introduction by Lawrence D. Kritzman (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 215. For detailed analysis on Foucault's defence of Iranian revolution and his debates with feminists like Atoussa H. and Marxists like Maxime Rodinson, see Janet Afary and Kevin B. Anderson, *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution: Gender and the Seductions of Islamism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[266] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 120.

[267] Bobby Sayyid, 'Sign O'Times: Kaffirs and Infidels Fighting the Ninth Crusade', in Ernesto Laclau, ed. *The Making of Political Identities* (London: Verso, 1994), pp 264–286.

[268] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, pp 116–118.

[269] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*.

field became a vehicle through which secular demands of dissatisfied classes is expressed'.[270] Sayyid argues that Islam as an ideological vocabulary 'is also the condition of possibility by which a set of demands can be constructed… Islam is not just the way in which deep structural interests are masked, it is also the means by which interests and identities are formed'.[271] In this respect, it is interesting to see how Islamists, in theoretical tone and tenor as well as in rhetoric, pose Islam as a challenge to or as an alternative to both liberal capitalism and state socialism.[272] In fact, Ayatollah Khomeini's usage of Jalal Al-e Ahmad's critical term-*Westoxication* (*Gharbzadegi*), became a part of 'anti-Western' Islamic revolutionary discourse in Iran.[273] Moreover, in a post-civilization world, a militant adventurer like Osama bin Laden and his shadowy organization Al-Qaeda in the twenty-first century cannot resist a globalized American empire, made of nebulous capital. Rather, Muslim ideologues in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had articulated a more sophisticated mode of resistance to European colonialism even within the epistemic limitations of the Orientalist binary of 'Islam and the West'.[274]

Although the literature on modernity, Islamism and postmodernity is put into scrutiny for its projection of an essential Islam and essential Islamism,[275] it shares a common view that Islamism is a critique and challenge to the 'West', either in the form of opposition to the Western modernist projects of secularism, liberalism, socialism and nationalism, or as a response to the hyper-consumerism of postmodern societies of the West. Thus, in most discussions, Islamism is seen in relation to the 'West' either as a negative portrayal of 'threat' to Western values and civilization in the Orientalist formulations, or as a positive connotation of resistance, protest, challenge and critique to the hegemony of the West in some anti-Orientalist and postmodern analysis. In fact, the 'West' becomes a common reference point for both the Orientalist and anti-Orientalist analyses of Islamism.

On commenting on Islamism, the centrality of the West is, however, not entirely peculiar to academic and journalistic exercises. The political ideology of

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[270] Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror*, p. 45.

[271] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, p. 39.

[272] Maududi, *West versus Islam*; Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution*; Ali Shariati, *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique,* 1980, trans. R. Campbell (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, 2008).

[273] Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundation of the Islamic Revolution in Iran,* 1993 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2006), pp 72–87.

[274] Hamid Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[275] Ismail, 'Being Muslim: Islam, Islamism and Identity Politics', pp 614–631.

contemporary Islamism and its everyday political practices, in fact, reassures that Islamism cannot exist without the 'West' as an antagonistic frontier. As Amartya Sen argues, the intensely anti-Western nature of many Islamist movements 'suggests that they are, in fact, deeply dependent on the West'.[276] Such anti-Western Islamist movements 'carve out for themselves a particular territory which involves a social vision and a political outlook in which the West has a powerfully negative but central role. If contemporary Islamic fundamentalism is, in this sense, parasitic on the West, the terrorism aimed at America or Europe that sometimes goes with it is even more so. To dedicate one's life to undermining the West and to blowing up prominent edifices that have practical or symbolic importance in the West reflects an obsession with the West that overwhelms all other priorities and values. It is one of the preoccupations that can be much encouraged by the dialectics of the colonized mind'.[277]

In celebrating Islamism as an effective and viable critique of Western modernity, postmodern academics have often given similar arguments like Islamists themselves. As Haideh Moghissi asserts, postmodernism in giving 'voice to those constructed as Other…have entrapped (itself) in the headlong pursuit of the "exotic" and "native". ...In the end, the postmodern relativists collude with the fundamentalists' culturalist solutions to crises of modernity and modernization'.[278] This is because both postmodern relativism and Islamism share common grounds of unremitting hostility towards Western modernity, rejection of Western project for the reforms of gender relations, 'their enthusiastic appreciation of everything non-Western, and their semi-critique of capitalism—neither rejecting capitalism altogether nor envisioning a socialist society as a viable alternative'.[279] Other commonalities between postmodernism and Islamism include their emphasis on localism, opposition to secularism and rejection of excessive Western consumerism.[280] Furthermore, Turner observes yet another similarity between the academic discourse of postmodernism and political discourse of Islamism—their preference for 'the authenticity of tradition' as compared to 'inherited, imported or alien knowledge'.[281] Hardt and Negri argue that 'considered simply in cultural terms, Islamic fundamentalism is a paradoxical kind of postmodernist theory—postmodern only because it chronologically follows

[276] Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (London: Penguin Books &Allen Lane, 2006), p. 100.

[277] Ibid, p. 101.

[278] Haideh Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Limits of Postmodern Analysis* (London: Zed Books, 1999), p. 8.

[279] Ibid.

[280] Ibid, p. 75.

[281] Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*, p. 7.

and opposes Islamic modernism. It is more properly postmodernist, however, when considered in geopolitical terms' because 'powerful segments of Islam have been in some sense "anti-Western" since the religion's inception'.[282] The novelty of contemporary resurgence of 'fundamentalism', however, lies in its dismissal of emerging powers in the new imperial order.[283]

In offering a postmodern analysis of questioning the modernist–rationalist discourse of the West, Euben argues that 'the social scientific study of Islamic fundamentalism is not necessarily the product of considered agreement but rather the result of a historically and culturally contingent intellectual inheritance: the discourse of modern rationalism'.[284] Euben refuses to see Islamism as antimodern and, thus, offers a complex relationship between Islamism, modernity and postmodernism. In fact, Islamism has been viewed as a peculiar critique of modernity. To quote Euben:

> 'Fundamentalist critiques and movements and sensibilities are not premodern, although they certainly draw upon and reinterpret ideals located in a 'Golden Past'. Nor are they antimodern, although they cohere around a repudiation of many central epistemological assumptions constitutive of post-Enlightenment modernity. Like postmodernism, fundamentalists' paradoxical relationship to modernity represents an attempt to move beyond modernity in a way that is simultaneously parasitic upon it. Yet at the same time their antihermeneutic 'foundationalism' is incompatible with the postmodern suspicion of foundations. It is the case that fundamentalists, along with postmodernists and Western critics of modernity, emphasize the dark side of rationalism and insist we attend to what the post-Enlightenment vision of modernity has excluded and precluded. …The Western and Islamist critique of modernity… is thus perhaps best characterized as an attempt simultaneously to abolish, transcend, preserve, and transform modernity'.[285]

The postmoderns/poststructuralists call for a dialogue between Islam(ism) and postmodernity because both the Islamist discourse and the postmodern one share a commonality that Jean Francois Lyotard calls 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'.[286] The postmodern argument is that since both the *grand metanarratives* of 'liberal capitalism' and 'bureaucratic socialism'—the projects of European modernity and Western enlightenment, have failed in Muslim societies, people are increasingly

[282] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (London: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 149.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror*, pp 20–21.
[285] Ibid, pp 166–167.
[286] Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, p. 4.

turning towards religious and faith-based movements. Here, Islamic religion becomes an alternative ideology and an alternative way of life that articulates the discontents of modernity.[287] In contrast, taking Islam as a discursive tradition, in an insightful study, Arkoun presents 'a liberal, critical Islam open to change' while denouncing the Orientalism of Western Islamicists and the offensive/defensive apologia of Islamism in the name of 'authenticity', besides critiquing the Islamist assertion of 'dogmatic affirmations and self-confirming discourse'.[288]

However, Hardt and Negri problematize such similarities between 'postmodernism' and 'fundamentalism' while arguing that 'postmodernist and fundamentalist discourses stand in most respects in polar opposition: hybridity versus purity, difference versus identity, mobility versus stasis…postmodernists and the current wave of fundamentalists have arisen not only at the same time but also in response to the same situation, only at opposite poles of the global hierarchy… postmodernist discourses appeal primarily to the winners in the process of globalization and fundamentalist discourses to the losers'.[289] In this regard, Patnaik argues that not all forms of religious 'fundamentalism' are losers of globalization, as *Hindutva* is certainly a beneficiary of such a process of globalization with its capitulation and genuflection before imperialism, while 'Islamic fundamentalism' represents a 'protest' against imperialism.[290]

Complex relationship between imperialism and Islamism: It is this logic of seeing Islamism as an ideology of the losers of globalization, that a few Marxists like Patnaik find as a protest movement but not against the 'West', as the postmoderns argue. Rather Patnaik labels Islamism as 'anti-imperialist' and 'anti-consumerist' in the contemporary world, although it was originally nurtured by imperialism.[291] Such anti-imperialism of contemporary Islamism is a function of its peculiar feudal-mercantile class character threatened by the imperialist penetration in the current phase of globalization.[292] Marxist analysis of the rise of Islamism draws attention to the structures of imperialism itself, with accentuating unemployment and recession out of global economic order, and the imperialist policies vis-à-vis Muslim societies, destabilizing the erstwhile nationalist, secular, progressive-democratic and in some cases socialist regimes[293] in the Muslim

[287] Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism, Globalism*.

[288] Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers* trans. and ed. Robert D. Lee (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

[289] Ibid, pp 149–150.

[290] Patnaik, 'Of Finance and Fascism', pp 80–83.

[291] Ibid.

[292] Ibid, p. 83.

[293] Patnaik, 'Imperialism and Terrorism'; Patnaik, 'Of Finance and Fascism', pp 75–87.

world as narrated before. Hence, the present tussle between the 'West' and 'Islamism', as portrayed by substantial academic and journalistic literature, in a way, is not a 'clash of civilizations', but more of a 'clash' between two varied forms of 'fundamentalisms' – i.e. between 'imperialist fundamentalists' and 'Islamic fundamentalists' – in which, the latter, the erstwhile subjects and collaborators of American empire had struck back on its master.[294]

Without arguing in terms of such a complex relationship between imperialism and Islamism, Amin argues that even today, Islamism serves the interests of imperialism.[295] This is because on real social issues, Islamism aligns itself with the camp of 'dependent capitalism' and 'dominant imperialism' by defending the 'sacred character of property', and legitimizing 'inequality and all the requirements to capitalist reproduction'.[296] Moreover, Islamists have hardly opposed any reactionary law promoted in any Muslim country and from the very beginning, they got active support from the ruling classes of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, whose local comprador bourgeoisie, nouveaux riches and beneficiaries of current 'imperialist globalization' have generously promoted Islamism.[297] Thus, Islamism is basically an 'anti-Western' (almost 'anti-Christian') than an 'anti-imperialist' movement.[298] Amin argues that except Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine, who are involved in anti-imperialist struggles due to local conjunctures, Islamism, in general, is perfectly complementary to global liberal capitalism.[299] This is due to its communitarian project, which replaces social consciousness and struggle with supposed collective identities like American-style communitarianism that are indifferent to such struggles.[300]

However, in the present context of Islamist opposition to globalization, there are intellectual confusions among scholars in either separating or unifying the ideologies of 'Islamic fundamentalism' and 'anti-globalization'.[301] Islamism is currently regarded as an ideology of 'anti-Americanism' like many other secular varieties of anti-Americanism, Marxist, Latin American or Asian origin.[302] The

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294 Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London: Verso, 2002).

295 Amin, 'Political Islam in the Service of Imperialism', pp 1–19.

296 Ibid, p. 2.

297 Ibid.

298 Ibid.

299 Amin, *Eurocentrism*, pp 82-83.

300 Ibid.

301 Gayil Talshir, 'The Phoenix of Ideology', in Gayil Talshir, Mathew Humphrey and Michael Freeden (eds.), *Taking Ideology Seriously: 21st Century Reconfigurations* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.

302 Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp 159-161.

only difference between anti-Americanism of Islamism with its secular counterparts, is the Islamist emphasis on the religio-cultural flavour of its political language.[303]

Assessing the academic debates on Islamism

The problem with academic discourses commenting on *Islamism* is its emphasis on binary discursive constructions between Orientalism, on the one hand, and Anti-Orientalism and Islamism on the other. The two major camps of Orientalists and anti-Orientalists, to study Islamism in relation to 'Western modernity', take extreme positions. The Orientalist approach ends up in almost racist arguments while vilifying the Muslim world as a potential 'enemy' or 'threat' to the West, and the Anti-Orientalist position almost justifies Islamism and its attendant assertions as a 'protest discourse' against Western modernity celebrating the 'Islamist authenticity' and 'resistance'. Regarding the 'protest' character of Islamism against the West, one should first acknowledge the fact that the very Islamic concepts of an Islamist ideology were themselves constructed in relation to Western concepts. Therefore, according to Tibi, 'modern Islam, in spite of shrill accusations against European hegemony, is unthinkable without European colonialism'.[304]

However, I agree with Fred Halliday who argues that in reading the problematic of West versus Islam, one needs to be cautious of oversimplified stereotypes of Eurocentric Orientalism, postmodern celebration of Islamism and the self-assertions of Islamism, all of which assume almost a unitary and homogenous identity for the West and for all Muslims/Islam without deeply understanding the diverse and often rival traditions within both the West and Islam.[305]

The so-called conflict between Islam versus the West is premised upon the fundamental Orientalist notion of a tussle between 'the West and the Rest'.[306] The construction of Islamism as an 'enemy' of the West eventually fits into the expansionist policies of Euro-American imperialism and, thus, are marked by an ideological justification through the rhetoric of 'just war'. The ideological manifestation of an Orientalist discourse is, thus, founded on the basic proposition that Islamic civilization in general is incompatible with 'democracy', 'peace',

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[303] Ibid.

[304] Bassam Tibi, *The Crisis of Modern Islam: A Preindustrial Culture in the Scientific-Technological Age*, translated by Judith von Sivers, foreword by Peter von Sivers (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988), p. 39.

[305] Fred Halliday, 'West encountering Islam: Islamophobia reconsidered', in Ali Mohammadi, ed. *Islam Encountering Globalization* (Oxford: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), pp 14–35.

[306] The phrase was popularly used by Kishore Mahbubani, 'The West and the Rest', *The National Interest* (Summer 1992), pp 3–13.

'freedom' and 'justice' and, hence, the West, effectively represented by Euro-American powers, has to export those normative ideals into the Muslim world.

However, Islamism as a political discourse has been seen by experts as a 'critique of the way "modernity" has been experienced' in the Muslim world.[307] So, the rise of Islamism can be conceptualized as a product of the discontents of Euro-American modernity in Muslim societies. This critical stance of Islamism vis-à-vis Euro-American modernity often overlaps with a general critique of the West in Islamist discourses as one shall notice in several chapters of this book. The Islamist critique of the West is fundamentally based on the premise that the ills of the Muslim world are a result of imitating the 'evil West' and it is the failure of Western socio-economic and political models to deliver *true* justice, equality and democracy. Islamism claims to offer an *alternative* version of justice, equality and democracy that becomes the cornerstone of normative political ideals of Islamism. In this respect, Islamism becomes a source of identity formation and a tool of political action that can rebuild a confident and combatant identity in accordance with the Islamic ideal of egalitarianism and community service, which also enables Muslims to organize and control their own communities, while resisting the Western policies of cultural assimilation and economic and political domination.[308]

However, the Islamist ideology, as expressed by the ideologues of Islamism(s), is a negation of Western socio-economic and political models.[309] In this regard, Islamism cannot independently exist without constructing an antagonistic frontier, represented by the Occident. It is the construction of the 'evil' and 'ignorant' Occident in the name of 'Occidentalism'[310], implying a rejection of everything to do with the West and an implicit rejection of the legacy of European modernity and enlightenment that become some of the important features of Islamism. This ultra-critical discourse by a section of postmodern academics and Islamists, while questioning the Orientalist discourse of 'West is best', eventually replaces it with 'Islam is best'. The radical critique of the Western modernist project is justified by the construction of an 'oppressive', 'pervert' and 'nude' *West* within the Islamist discourses. The Occidentalist discourse of Islamism is an inversion and mirror image of the Orientalist stereotype and, thus, constructs a notion of a dehumanized West.

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[307] Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror*, p. 2.

[308] Moallem, 'Cultural Nationalism and Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 207.

[309] Maududi, *Political Theory of Islam*; Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution*; Maududi, *West versus Islam*.

[310] The term was popularized by Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: A Short History of Anti-Westernism* (London: Atlantic, 2004).

It should be remembered that Said was himself not in favour of an Occidentalist response to Orientalism.[311] Experts argue that while the Orientalist discourse produces an 'Islamophobia', a symptom of 'Occidentosis', the Occidentalist discourse constructs an 'Islamophilia', a symptom of 'Orientitis', which celebrates the sanctity of popular Islamic beliefs and rejects modernization/Westernization and secularization process in the Muslim countries since the Islamist discourses label them as elitist and aggressive cultural imposition of the dominant West.[312] Islamism reverses the Orientalist argument to its justification of critiquing the West and in essence produces a similar discourse of the Islam versus the West as one can see in Orientalism. As a counterpart of Orientalism, the image of 'West' in the Occidentalist nature of Islamist discourses is associated with the construction of a 'Western Other', and in effect promotes an inverted racism, albeit countering Orientalist racism. I am not interested in trapping myself in such racist discourses that sustain both Orientalism and Occidentalism. Rather, the motivation behind this book is to take the challenge of bypassing such racist discourses. Therefore, I now turn to justify such a project while explaining the specific case studies and the theoretical and methodological framework of this book in the next chapter. But before going straight into the next chapter, let me provide a brief outline of the chapterization of the book.

Outline of chapters

The study is a contemporary political analysis of the Islamist movement of Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh within the context of economic reforms that follow the policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization. Therefore, I have argued in this book that economic reforms in contemporary India and Bangladesh have created very different conditions in which Islamists operate and articulate their politics and ideology. Many of their demands are new and were not seen before in the history of Islamist movements. Thus, historical analysis and the impact of colonialism on Islamism is certainly beyond the scope of this study as the Jamaat is currently responding to the contemporary structural changes in the economy and society, which are being influenced by the processes of globalization and liberalization. However, while doing a critical review of the existing literature on the subject, some aspects of historical origins of Islamism and the Islamist encounter with colonialism have been evidently acknowledged.

311 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 328.

312 Rahnema and Sohrab Behdad, 'Introduction: Crisis of an Islamic State' in Rahnema and Behdad, eds. *Iran after the Revolution*, p. 7.

The book is divided into six chapters besides the 'Introduction', which in turn are subdivided into several subsections. In the 'Introduction', I have already clarified the terminologies that have been often used in this study and have also critically examined the existing literature on Islamism. Chapter 1 discusses the research problems and existing categories of analysis in studying Islamism in general. The 'Introduction' and Chapter 1 act as joint anchors for the rest of the book by describing the analytical, methodological, ontological and ontical issues involved in this research. Chapter 2 outlines the background of contemporary India, where Islamism operates both as a political ideology and as a political movement. It also engages with the specific rhetoric of JIH. Chapter 3 discusses the ideological articulations of the Indian Jamaat in the contemporary phase of neoliberalism. Chapter 4 sets out the background of the Bangladeshi context, where Islamism articulates its politics and ideology. Chapter 5 discusses the ideological articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh. After analyzing the specific context and ideological articulations of Jamaat in Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, Chapter 6 makes a comparative analysis of the ideological articulations of Jamaat in contemporary India and Bangladesh, along with summarizing the major arguments of the book.

The tension or tussle between the idea of the nation–state and the traditional claims of the Islamist movements to be transnational in nature has also been incorporated in this book. I do not think that there is any single universal Islamist ideology. Thus, any broader changes in the so-called 'Islamist ideology', as many commentators suggest, is hardly an issue of concern to this study. On the contrary, I argue that the changes in the socio-economic structures in contemporary India and Bangladesh have influenced the ideological articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami, a prominent Islamist organization in South Asia.

1

Islamism and Ideology

Philosophical Issues and Analytical Categories

Islamism poses a number of contradictions in the context of contemporary globalization. Its critique of the 'Imperialist Western powers' by challenging the Eurocentric discourses while being historically nurtured by the Western power bloc is a classic contradiction in itself. The contradictions of its totalistic ideology are exposed in defying the project of Western enlightenment and modernity by describing it as a 'rule of ignorance' (*Nizam-e-Jahiliya*)[1] while taking refuge in a particular form of Islamist totalism, whose construction would not have been possible without its recourse to the (re)interpretations of Western knowledge systems in an Islamic context. [2]

I write this book in the context of current debates on the study of ideologies that question the previous assumption that ideologies by nature are 'secular'[3] and, thus, 'disentangled from religious faiths'.[4] Scholars have pointed out serious

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1 Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Islam and Ignorance* (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2003).

2 Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, 'Introduction', in Sidahmed and Ehteshami, eds. *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 14; Nasr, 'Mawdudi and the Jama'at-i-Islami', in Rahnema, ed. *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, p. 105; Khalid B. Sayeed, 'The Jama'at-i-Islami Movement in Pakistan', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (March 1957), p. 67; Malise Ruthven, *Islam: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp 5-6.

3 Talshir, 'The Phoenix of Ideology', p. 4.

4 Michael Freeden, 'Confronting the Chimera of a "Post-ideological" Age', in Gayil Talshir, Mathew Humphrey and Michael Freeden, eds. *Taking Ideology Seriously: 21st Century Reconfigurations* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 153.

limitations of conventional studies on ideology that make 'sharp demarcations between ideologies (which are defined as political, action-orientated and intimately tied to modernity) and religions (which are dismissed as otherworldly, conservative and anti-modern)'.[5] In this respect, recent literature on ideology suggests that Islamism as a comprehensive worldview can be regarded as a modern political ideology, since it meets the accepted definition of a modern ideology with a universal morphology and a structured pattern of core, adjacent and peripheral concepts.[6]

However, it is not enough to merely acknowledge Islamism as a modern ideology with a morphological character of its own. Rather, considering Islamism in India and Bangladesh, I tend to reject the general tendency of the literature on Islamism in privileging the 'Greater Middle-Eastern'[7] specificity that does not represent the globality, heterogeneity and plurality of the Muslim world. Moreover, India and Bangladesh are home to the third and fourth largest concentration of Muslims in the world after Indonesia and Pakistan and the Indo-Bangladeshi Muslims together constitute around 20 per cent of the world's total Muslim population.[8] Therefore, any serious study on contemporary Islamist ideology cannot perhaps overlook India and Bangladesh with such huge concentration of Muslims – the prime constituency of Islamism. Thus, in this study, I wish to explore the following questions – What are the specific ideological articulations of Islamism in a Muslim-minority country like India and a Muslim-majority country like Bangladesh? What are the political and strategic visions of Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh? How far has Islamism been successful in mobilizing *people* in India and Bangladesh to attain its specific political goals?

In the context of limited literature on non-Western ideologies, I try to venture into an unexplored area as 'the presence of extra-Western ideologies is still in an embryonic state of study'.[9] Although the study of Islamic political thought is a well-established field, research on the subject of Islamism is very

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5 Michaelle L. Browers, 'The Secular Bias in Ideology Studies and the Case of Islamism', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (February 2005), p. 75.

6 See Browers, 'The Secular Bias in Ideology Studies and the Case of Islamism', pp 75-93.

7 The term 'Greater Middle-East' is used by the American establishment under Bush administration to include 'all Muslim nations, from countries of North Africa bordering the Mediterranean Sea to Pakistan, including Turkey and Israel'. See Safa Haeri, 'Concocting a "Greater Middle East" brew', *Asia Times Online* (March 4, 2004): available at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/FC04Ak06.html accessed on 31 May 2011.

8 *Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population* (Washington DC: Pew Book Centre, October 2009), p. 5. The report is based on latest census data and demographic surveys.

9 Freeden, 'Confronting the Chimera of a "Post-ideological" Age', p. 144.

recent in ideology studies. This is because it is only in the past three decades that Islamism has emerged as a major ideological movement. This study will address the complexities and problems of Islamism with reference to a particular Islamist organization in India and Bangladesh, namely the Jamaat-e-Islami. In comparing the Jamaat-e-Islami across South Asia, the study will try to point out the similarities and differences of Islamist ideological articulations in a minority context (India, where the main constituency of Islamism, i.e., Muslims, is a minority group) and in a majority context (Bangladesh, where Muslims are in a majority). Therefore, the study will look into varied forms of Islamist ideological expressions in different contexts. In India, Jamaat-e-Islami is a small organization and does not even contest elections. In contrast, in Bangladesh, the Jamaat was an important member of the national government from 2001 to 2006 and has been an important player in contemporary Bangladeshi politics. The question of differentiation in Islamist ideological expressions in varied contexts is important to investigate, given the fact that a section of media and academia often presents 'Islamism' as a homogenous category.[10] Moreover, the ideological manifestations of Jamaat-e-Islami are important to study because it is believed that the founder of Jamaat, Maududi, attempted to ideologize and reinterpret Islamic texts, history and tradition, which had tremendous influence on a number of twentieth-century Islamist movements.[11]

But what are the justifications for comparing Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh? In India, secularism is a state policy with no state religion while theoretically supporting equal treatment and recognition of all religions. But at the same time, India has witnessed several violations of certain secularist principles in its recent history. In this book, I shall try to unravel how Islamism responds to Indian secularism. Also, I shall try to narrate the tussle for hegemony between secularism and Islamism in Bangladesh, right from the emergence of Bangladesh in the early 1970s as a secular state, to the compromise of its secular principles from the second half of 1970s to the formal

[10] On this issue see A. G. Noorani, *Islam and Jihad* (New Delhi: Left Word, 2002) and F. Volker Greifenhagen, 'Islamic Fundamentalism(s): More Than a Pejorative Epithet?' in Carol Schick, JoAnn Jaffe and Ailsa M. Watkinson, eds. *Contesting Fundamentalism(s)* (New Delhi: Aakar Books, 2006).

[11] John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, Third edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 131. Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi has been spelt by various authors and publishers in numerous ways. Sayyid has been often spelt as Sayyed or Syed. Abul A'la has been spelt sometimes as Abu-l-'Ala' and Maududi has been often spelt as Mawdudi or Maudoodi. Moreover, before Maududi without Sayyid Abul A'la, sometimes a prefix term 'Mawlana' or 'Maulana' is used, signifying leader or a learned man in Islamic tradition.

constitutional negation of secularism from late 1980s onwards, and finally the renewed assertion of secularism in present Bangladeshi politics after the 2008 Bangladesh general elections. In this respect, a contemporary history of Islamist response to secularism in India and Bangladesh from the vantage point of political theory supplements the extant academic literature on the subject. In this regard, it is prudent to first discuss the existing literature on Jamaati Islamism in India and Bangladesh.

Existence of Jamaati Islamism in India and Bangladesh

The review of academic literature on Islamism that I have so far discussed in the 'Introduction' is more focussed on either the general commentaries on Islamism or the theoretical analysis based on Islamist movements in West Asia, North Africa and Pakistan. In contrast, this book looks into a relatively under-researched territory of Islamism in India and Bangladesh. This is not to overlook the theoretical and analytical insights of the academic literature that I have so far reviewed. In this book, I rather engage and elaborate on the academic literature on Islamism that deals with the Islamist 'challenge', 'critique' and 'rejection' of the 'West' as reviewed previously. In the following chapters, I suggest that the Islamist critique/challenge/rejection of the West is contextual and issue-specific. It is not always simply a challenge/critique/rejection of the Western and 'un-Islamic' economic, political and cultural projects; sometimes it can positively engage and welcome these projects and may make an alliance with some of the 'un-Islamic' political actors. In this respect, I argue that Islamism in India and Bangladesh has very different approaches in conceptualizing and dealing with the 'un-Islamic other', which it promises to fight against, in order to win the hegemonic battle for Islamisation. However, to show this *difference* of approach of Islamism in two different contexts, one cannot ignore the existing literature on Islamism in India and Bangladesh. Therefore, I will briefly discuss the existence of Islamism of the Jamaat-e-Islami with specific reference to India and Bangladesh. By doing so, I will also briefly point out my engagement and differences with the existing literature on Islamism in India and Bangladesh, working within a set of analytical frameworks, and the key research questions that I am interested in addressing in this book.

There is no denying the fact that Jamaat-e-Islami is one of the most important Islamist organizations in South Asia, and its brand of Islamism, which I call 'Jamaati Islamism', is a significant politico-ideological movement in the region. In fact, what makes the Jamaat distinct from other major Muslim outfits like Jamiat-I-Ulema, Tablighi Jamaat and Muslim League is that it is perhaps the only

moderate Islamist organization in South Asia, which aspires to restructure the prevalent socio-political system in line with Islamist precepts, with a political goal of establishing an Islamic state. The political project of Islamism in post-colonial India and Bangladesh has so far remained largely unexplored. In this respect, it is important to keep in mind the dearth of literature on Islamism in India and Bangladesh. Whatever research has been done on Islamism in South Asia in general and Jamaat-e-Islami in particular, has been Pakistan-centric with less academic coverage given to the Islamist project of Jamaat in India and Bangladesh, as evident from the works of Vali Nasr,[12] Kalim Bahadur,[13] Mumtaz Ahmad,[14] Frederic Grare[15] and Humeira Iqtidar.[16] Furthermore, the academic literature that deals with Islamism and Jamaat in South Asia is more of descriptive, journalistic and narrative style, and this is not exceptional even with studies specifically on India by M. S. Agwani[17] and J. B. Das Gupta[18] or, in the case of Bangladesh, by Kabir,[19] Banu[20] and Riaz.[21]

Except Iqtidar's ethnographic work, most of these studies end up discussing the writings of Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, or narrating the history of Jamaat or linking Jamaat's role in facilitating terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir or giving information about the numbers of Jamaat members, activists and supporters while criticizing the Jamaat, albeit from their respective ideological perspectives. More often than not, the literature on Jamaat in South Asia offers a rigid orthodox class reductionism by just pointing towards the class backgrounds of its members and supporters without sufficiently explaining how people coming from *different*

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12 Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution*; Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

13 Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*.

14 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', pp 457–530.

15 Frederic Grare, *Political Islam in the Indian Subcontinent: The Jamaat-I-Islami* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001).

16 Humeira Iqtidar, *Secularizing Islamists?: Jama'at-e-Islami and Jama'at-ud-Da'wa in Urban Pakistan* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011).

17 M. S. Agwani, *Islamic Fundamentalism in India* (Chandigarh: Twenty-First Century India Society, 1986).

18 J. B. Das Gupta, *Islamic Fundamentalism and India* (Gurgaon: Hope India Publications, 2002).

19 Bhuian Md. Manoar Kabir, *Politics and Development of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 2006).

20 U. A. B. Razia Akter Banu, 'Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh: Challenges and Prospects', in Hussain Mutalib and Taj ul-Islam Hashmi, eds. *Islam, Muslims and the Modern State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp 80–99.

21 Ali Riaz, *God Willing: The Politics of Islamism in Bangladesh* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004).

class backgrounds rally behind Islamism or how Islamism organizes varied sets of population under its political programme. This kind of literature also cannot sufficiently explain why only a certain fraction of any particular class comes to the fold of Islamism while the rest is not satisfied with the appeal of its political project. Neither can it explain why is it that the Islamists and not any other political discourse like secular liberalism, communist politics or social democracy could attract a section among the Muslims in India and Bangladesh, nor can it explain why even with the presence of an Islamist discourse among a section of Muslims in India and Bangladesh, the project of Islamism has failed to emerge as a hegemonic discourse among the Muslim community in these countries. On the contrary, I address these questions by showing how Islamism tries to articulate a politics of 'populism' by appealing to different sections of population against a common antagonistic frontier, and at the same time how it fails to successfully construct the populist political project while limiting itself to a particularist political entity. Furthermore, the existing academic literature on Islamism in India and Bangladesh tries to make an ethical condemnation of Islamism rather than explain how it comes to the forefront in influencing a section of Muslims in India and Bangladesh.

Of late, Irfan Ahmad's anthropological work has engaged with some conceptual issues of Islamism under a democratic set-up in India by taking up the case study of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (henceforth JIH).[22] Although there is merit in some assessment of Ahmad, coupled with rigorous anthropological analysis of Islamist movement of Jamaat-e-Islami, it has its limits in understanding the political ontology[23] of Islamism. Ahmad's book argues that when secularism and democracy are responsive to the traditions and aspirations of its Muslim citizens in India, Muslim minorities in turn embrace pluralism and democracy. However, when democracy becomes majoritarian and exclusionary, Indian Muslims turn radical. Furthermore, Ahmad argues that 'secular democracy played a key role

[22] Irfan Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India: The Transformation of Jamaat-e-Islami* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[23] Ontology and its philosophical derivative and variant, 'ontic' has a place in the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Second edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp 260–261—compiled by the Cambridge University philosopher, Simon Blackburn. Blackburn's dictionary suggests that 'ontology' is 'derived from the Greek word for being, but the seventeenth century coinage for the branch of metaphysics that concerns itself with what exists'. The specific meanings of the terms like 'ontic/ontical' and 'ontological' and the conceptual difference between them in the domain of politics and political theory will be clarified later in this chapter. Since this is a book intended to primarily address the students and scholars of political theory and ideology studies, these valid philosophical categories have been used in this work instead of abandoning the alleged 'jargons' over simple English.

in the moderation of the Jamaat',[24] whereas radicalization of Student's Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) 'was a response to the rise of Hindu nationalism that was targeting Muslims'.[25]

However, even if democracy and secularism are relatively more responsive to the traditions and aspirations of Muslims and even if India is not ruled by Hindu nationalism, as evident during the Congress led UPA regime (2004-2014) in sharp contrast to the BJP led NDA regime (1998–2004) when Indian democracy became more 'majoritarian' and 'exclusionary', *a section of Indian Muslims* might even turn towards Islamist assertion. In fact, a space of Islamist political articulation is always present among a section of Indian Muslims. The current JIH President, Syed Jalaluddin Umari argued in an interview that it is precisely because of the 'immature', 'intemperate' and 'impractical' approach of SIMI that Jamaat fundamentally differed and parted away from them.[26] The JIH President in fact thinks that there can be some Muslims 'who could engage in disruptive activities'.[27] Jamaat's political secretary, Mujtaba Farooq recently said, 'angry voices could still occasionally be heard among frustrated Muslim youth'.[28] In fact, journalists claim that '[a] spate of terror attacks on Indian cities by Indian Mujahideen', a radical Islamist group formed after the ban of SIMI, also had further plans to launch more terror strikes on Indian soil.[29] Ahmad's argument about the 'changed nature of secular democracy from 1980s… [that] led to the radicalization of SIMI' as '[i]n 1990s SIMI called for jihad and caliphate'[30] holds true even today, as evident from the

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24 Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India*, p. 8.

25 Ibid, p. 9.

26 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=37&pageid=381 accessed on 22 March 2010.

27 Ibid. The SIMI was formed at Aligarh on 25th April, 1977 as a student wing of the JIH. When SIMI activists protested against Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat's visit to India in 1981, and greeted him with black flags, the Jamaat leadership distanced themselves from SIMI. While young SIMI activists identified Arafat as a western puppet, the senior JIH leaders saw Arafat as a champion of the Palestinian cause. JIH decided to abandon SIMI and floated a new student wing, the Students Islamic Organization (SIO) on 19th October, 1982. See http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/terroristoutfits/simi.htm & http://sio-india.org/about-sio accessed on 16/11/2014; C. Christine Faire, 'Students Islamic Movement of India and the Indian Mujahideen: An Assessment', *Asia Policy*, No. 9 (January 2010), pp 101–19.

28 Zia Haq, 'Jamaat shift: Says we uphold Constitution', *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 21 March 2010.

29 Diwakar and Vishwa Mohan, 'India sees chance to disrupt Karachi Project', *Times of India*, 21 March 2010.

30 Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India*, p. 9.

current militancy of Indian Mujahideen. In this respect, Ahmad's book could not convincingly explain why political systems of either secular democracy or strong influence of Hindu nationalism produced two different results of 'moderate Jamaat' and 'radical SIMI'. That is to say, while Indian democracy was becoming more exclusionary and majoritarian with post-Babri riots in the 1990s and under BJP-led NDA rule from 1998 to 2004, it cannot be adequately explained why Jamaat became 'moderate' and SIMI became 'radical'. Moreover, the Islamist assertion in Shah Bano case (1986), Salman Rushdie (1989) and Taslima Nasrin controversies (1993 onwards), Delhi's Batla house police encounter (2008), the Jamaat's pressure tactics in Kerala textbook controversy (2008), the staunch Islamist opposition to gay rights after the 2009 Delhi High Court's judgement to scrap Article 377 of Indian Penal Code, etc. are glaring examples of the fact that even if Indian democracy is relatively more responsive to the traditions and aspirations of its Muslim citizens under successive secular democratic Congress-led governments than under a majoritarian communal BJP-led government, a section of Muslims in turn do not necessarily and automatically embrace secularism, pluralism and democracy.

It would be an oversimplification to argue that the political attitudes of Indian Muslims just change due to a regime change from a majoritarian and exclusionary system to a plural democracy, given the fact that an overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims have been opposing both the Hindu and Muslim communalist forces and indeed support relatively mainstream secular parties. Moreover, Ahmad's two case studies with JIH and SIMI are insufficient to draw conclusions about generalized political orientations of a large and fragmented community of Indian Muslims whose political orientations just cannot be divided into a binary construction of 'moderate' versus 'radical' politics. Also, what Ahmad means by 'Muslim radical' is unclear and might be confusing since in the dominant academic and political discourses, Muslim radicalism is much more peripheral in contrast with Leftwing radicalism in India, and the two versions of radicalism are fundamentally different. Generalized claims, like that of Ahmad, about the political attitudes of a large community like 'Indian Muslims' cannot be made merely by a study of JIH and SIMI because the space of the *representative* of Indian Muslims is contested between several organizations. In fact, in Chapter 3, I will show how JIH has not been able to become a vanguard of Indian Muslims. Methodologically speaking, Ahmad tries to project a particularism of Islamist variant (which is also a marginalized political entity) as a representative of a wider Universalist community of Indian Muslims. On the contrary, in this book, I am interested in locating the particularism of Islamism within the different strands of political articulations among Indian Muslims. By looking at Jamaat-e-Islami, I do not want to claim that this is a study of 'Indian Muslims' as a whole. Rather this book is a study of ideological articulations among a *section* of Indian Muslims. In this context, an interesting question to ask is that even if the majority of Indian

Muslims rally behind secular forces, why does a minority section of Muslims in India *turn* towards Islamism?

In this respect, another important question to pose is that whether the lack of a credible anti-establishment discourse among Indian Muslims creates the condition of possibilities for an audience to espouse Islamism as a protest discourse? Can we argue that since Muslims are excluded from the realm of political power in India; resistance to political power is articulated by a section of Muslims with the language of Islamism? In the following chapters, one will see how Islamism opposes the power bloc and at the same time places particularist demands before the power bloc.

The prevalent academic literature on South Asian Islamism does not take into account the neoliberal policy regime of last two decades within which Islamism operates. In contrast, this book analyzes the character of Islamism in an age of neoliberal policy regime and will focus on the nature of Islamist support and opposition to neoliberalism by discussing the contrasting conditions of India and Bangladesh. It will try to unravel the complex relationship between neoliberalism and Islamism by narrating under what conditions Islamism opposes or critiques neoliberalism and under what situations it remains mute in critiquing neoliberalism. A theoretical analysis of Islamist response to neoliberalism is important in the mid of 'neoliberal consensus' that has been the 'hegemonic horizon' of world politics in the last three decades.[31] In such a context, the book is significant when the Islamists *claim* to challenge and 'criticize the un-Islamic ideologies'[32] in search of an 'Islamic alternative'.[33] In this book, I shall discuss how the existence of neoliberalism creates the conditions for Islamist opposition and negotiation with the neoliberal project depending on the specific and varied context of India and Bangladesh. Today, no serious study can ignore this neoliberal context under which Islamism makes a markedly different political articulation with a new set of political demands, which was never heard of before in the history of Islamist movements. Therefore, today, the ontological question of Islamism is not simply related to the re-articulation of religion in political terms, but how it identifies a chain of new antagonistic frontiers and articulates a new set of political demands in an era of neoliberal hegemony.

The existing academic works on Islamism in India and Bangladesh cannot convincingly explain how Islamism as a political force *came into being* or *exists* in Bangladesh or why Islamism is still a marginal political discourse among Indian

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31 Ernesto Laclau, 'Constructing Universality', in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), p. 306.

32 *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 9.

33 Ibid, p. 8.

Muslims. In other words, the existing literature on South Asian Islamism does not deal with the 'ontological' question, which I shall deal with in this study. In this regard, most academic literature that I have discussed above can be called *ontic* studies or *ontical research* on Islamism, largely concerned with empirico-factual analysis rather than engaging with broader *ontological* issues[34] regarding the very *existence* of the (political) being and (id)entity of Islamism. In this sense, this book reflects on both 'politics' and 'the political'. The former 'deals with the empirical field' and refers to the 'ontic level', where 'the set of practices and institutions through which an order is created, organizing human coexistence in the context of conflictuality provided by the political'. The latter is the domain of political theory and philosophy largely concerned with 'ontological' questions and the 'space of power, conflict and antagonism, constitutive of human societies'.[35]

Since, I am more interested in ontological research, I try to explain why and how Islamism exists as a political ideology and what are the attendant problems of its existence. This is not to say that I have ignored the 'ontic' content in this book. Surely, the qualitative data gathered from several interviews and the textual content of organizational literature, press statements, etc. of the case study of Jamaat have helped to analyze the dynamics of Islamism while unearthing its universal and particular claims and its abstract and concrete demands. Indeed, the empirical materials have helped to better understand the very existence of Islamism in India and Bangladesh and have provided a firm ground on which an ontological study becomes more comprehensible. Since the book engages with both ontological and ontical issues of Islamism in general, and Jamaati Islamism in particular, let me first make an assessment of the existing theoretical and methodological frameworks of the extant research on Islamism.

Existing theoretical and methodological frameworks: A critical assessment

In the 'Introduction', I have already discussed the Marxist and postmodern theorizations on Islamism. Although both the Marxist and the postmodern theorizations hold some merit in understanding the rise of Islamist movements in the contemporary world, this book will further investigate the complexity of

[34] 'Ontological', 'ontic' and 'ontical' as philosophical categories are used by one of the greatest philosophers of the twentieth century, Martin Heidegger, in his magnum opus, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962). The Oxford philosopher, Stephen Mulhall's commentary: *Heidegger and Being and Time*, Second edition, 1996 (New York: Routledge, 2005) also frequently uses 'ontological', 'ontic' and 'ontical'.

[35] Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp 8–9.

Islamism by studying the phenomena with conceptual tools like 'hegemony', 'ideological articulation', '(un)availability of political discourses', 'antagonistic frontier' and 'political mobilization' within the discipline of political theory from Laclau-Mouffe's perspective of post-Marxism, complemented by glimpses of political philosophy.

Islamism is a burning topic in modern scholarship and contemporary world affairs. In this respect, I will try to resist both the orientalist interpretation as well as some postmodern/poststructuralist eulogisation of Islamism while critically evaluating the Islamist ideology of Jamaat-e-Islami. Therefore, a meaningful study of Islamism needs to be distanced from both Orientalist discourses as well as some postmodern celebration of Islamism. For analyzing Islamist politics, scholars have pointed out the need to 'overcome the obscurantist limits of both Orientalism and anti-orientalism'.[36] The limits of poststructuralist/postmodern analysis of Islamism are manifold. In the first place, the celebration of indigenous and local authenticity by some poststructuralist/postmodern theories is questionable. As Christopher Norris argues, firstly, 'in truth, there is no such pure "authenticity" as Lévi-Strauss (like Rousseau) imagines to have been destroyed by the advent of writing in this narrow senses'.[37] Secondly, the construction of Islamist ideology was only possible with the borrowing of concepts by the Islamist ideologues from the ideologies of the West like fascism and communism[38] and Western socio-economic models like capitalism and socialism, even while they sought to construct an Islamic resistance to the West. By putting the prefix 'Islamic' with distinct Western concepts like 'state', 'ideology' and 'revolution', the Islamists try to make them appear different from the Western concepts.[39] As Tibi argues, modern Islam is not a pure autochthonous entity but an expression of the continuing argument of several secular ideologies in the Muslim world, like pan-Arabism and socialism that critique the penetration of colonial-industrial West.[40] Thus, Islamism is in fact a derivative ideology that could have been possible to construct only through an engagement with Western modernity. Islamism can also be characterized as an ideology of convenience because Islamism manipulates and misrepresents the religion of Islam as a convenient tool for critiquing the West, even if the conceptual foundations of Islamism are borrowed from the West. In

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36 Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 23.

37 Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 34.

38 Sidahmed and Ehteshami, 'Introduction', in Sidahmed and Ehteshami, eds. *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 14.

39 Nasr, 'Mawdudi and the Jama'at-i-Islami', p. 105.

40 Tibi, *The Crisis of Modern Islam*, p. 39.

fact, a scholar has argued that the inseparability of religion and politics and the centrality of the Islamic state in the discourses of Islamism in general and that of Maududi and his Jamaat-e-Islami in particular cannot be validated with original Islamic theology but can only be constructed with a particular interpretation of Islam in responding to the colonial state.[41]

Similarly, other scholars have argued how the Jamaat founder, Maududi's economic views were influenced 'by the economic theories of men like Marx, Hobson and Major Douglas, but he makes no acknowledgement of them'.[42] Islamist ideology is, thus, not exclusively 'Islamic' but hybrid in nature, mixing Islamic concepts with the twentieth-century Western ideas of both liberal and totalitarian variety.[43] Therefore, Islamism as an ideology cannot be simply regarded 'as a matter of cultural authenticity' that the postmoderns eulogize, but it is 'more a question of political agenda and choice'.[44] In fact, the postmodern and Islamist assertion of a 'culturally indigenous authenticity' is misplaced because there is no purist worldview of Islamism, as it has gone through a process of hybridization through an engagement with the West.

In the process of critiquing the project of Western modernity, Islamism targets both the 'macro-ideologies' of liberalism and socialism as well as 'thin/micro-ideologies' like nationalism and secularism.[45] A helpful approach to the study of ideologies is to concentrate on the peculiar rhetoric that is being used within a particular ideological discourse. While analyzing Jamaati Islamism, I argue that its critique of Western modernity is more rhetorical than a substantial engagement with different political concepts that shape the macro-ideologies of liberalism, conservatism and socialism as well as the micro-ideologies of nationalism and secularism. However, this is not to deny the peculiar rhetoric that Jamaati Islamists use for political mobilization. In this respect, Jamaati Islamism cannot be simply regarded as a 'protest ideology' against the ideologies of the West just because it has a challenging rhetoric against the West with specific Islamic concepts. In this book, I will show how the 'protest' of Jamaati Islamism against 'Western ideologies' is selective and context specific.

However, Islamism does not only confine itself to an anti-Western polemic, but it also poses an opposition to any ideology that is not Islamic. In case of its opposition to *Hindutva* (a non-Western phenomena), the concept of 'ignorance

41 Irfan Ahmad, 'The State in Islamist Thought', *ISIM Review*, No. 18 (Autumn 2006), pp 12–13.

42 Sayeed, 'The Jama'at-i-Islami Movement in Pakistan', p. 67.

43 Ruthven, *Islam*, pp 5–6.

44 Sidahmed and Ehteshami, 'Introduction', p. 14

45 For an analysis of macro and thin/micro-ideologies, see Freeden, *Ideology*.

of non-Islam' (un-Islamic *jahiliya*) is employed to justify Islamic opposition to *Hindutva* as well. The central principle of Islamism is, thus, based on the notion that 'man-made ideologies' and any other religious traditions are bound to fail as they have not resolved the fundamental problems of humanity (inequality and injustice) as argued by the Islamists.[46] In this context, Islam is projected by the Islamists as an emancipatory ideology for all of humanity.[47] So, the basis of opposition for Islamists to any political order and ideology is that of fighting an un-Islamic 'other'. Here, the concept of 'ignorance of non-Islam' (*jahiliya*) is of central importance to the Islamists to construct an antagonistic frontier against any form of non-Islam.

The everyday Islamist activism is marked by the construction of Islamist morality around conceptualization of predominant categories like *halal* (licit) and *haram* (illicit/prohibited) and 'Islamic' and 'un-Islamic'. This, in effect, leads to a further articulation of 'Islamic position' on any issue.[48] Youssef Choueiri argues that the construction of Islamism in the political discourses of Islamist theoreticians like Maududi, Qutb and Khomeini portrays an essential incompatibility between a universalist Islam and the notions of secularism and nationalism by equivalencing with a binary construction of belief and disbelief, monotheism and polytheism, Islam and atheism, and Islamic enlightenment and European ignorance (*jahiliya*).[49]

For the two modern theorists of Sunni Islamism, Maududi and Qutb, the concept of *jahiliya* is of central importance. Talal Asad interprets that '*jahiliya* referred historically to the period of pagan beliefs and customs of pre-Islamic Arabian society and has since acquired the sense of moral savagery (the Arabic root *jahl* signifies "ignorance" and "uncouthness")'.[50] The Islamist discourses identify 'secularism', 'communism' and other 'foreign' ideologies associated with the 'West' as the representation of *jahiliya* (ignorance of non-Islam). The Islamists argue that following such *jahil* (ignorant) western path is the root cause of Muslim misery

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46 See Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*.

47 See Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *The Road to Peace and Salvation* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2005); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Islam the Religion of the Future* (Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2000).

48 Salwa Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics: Culture, the State and Islamism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), p. 168.

49 Youssef Choueiri, 'The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements', in Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, eds. *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1996), pp 19–33.

50 Talal Asad, *On Suicide Bombing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 57. For a more detailed discussion on *jahiliya*, see Roxanne L. Euben, 'Killing (For) Politics: Jihad, Martyrdom, and Political Action', *Political Theory*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (February 2002), pp 4–35.

and the source of most economic, political and moral problems that the world is facing.[51] Here, it is noticeable that the theoretical model of Islam versus the Rest is constructed by the Islamists, quite similar to the Orientalist construction of 'West versus the Rest'.[52]

Among the many different shades of Islamist movements, the commonality they share is that of a belief 'in the "cause" of establishing an Islamic state'.[53] The concept of an Islamic state is an admixture of past traditions and a futurist trajectory. Al-Azmeh argues that in the Islamist discourses, the Medinian regime as a 'true Golden Age' is often the benchmark for achieving a pure Islamist state, but at the same time the Islamists do believe that 'its purity and integrality can be re-established, and its institutes constitute a programme of political and social action whose actuality, though not palpable, is yet possible'.[54] As historian Ira Lapidus notes, 'Islamic movements have to be understood as the expression of a utopian dream that shatters all categories of analysis'.[55] Thus, as an ideology, Islamism is a political project of combining a utopian past that goes back to the traditions of an 'ideal Islamic state' of the Prophet and his four successors in seventh-century Arabia, and a utopian future of an imagined Islamic state that according to the Islamists will be just, prosperous and devoid of any evils of the modern present.

The concept of an *Islamic State* is one of central importance in the discourse of Islamism in general and in Maududi's Jamaat-e-Islami in particular.[56] However, to achieve the goal of an Islamic state, Maududi urged the entire Muslim *ummah* (community of believers) to his call of *jihad* that signifies 'total struggle, offensive or defensive as the need may be, against the usurpation of God's sovereignty, whether by pseudo-religious monarchists or Westernized secular democrats'.[57] For Maududi, Islam is a 'revolutionary ideology which seeks to alter the social

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51 Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Fundamentalism since 1945*, pp 71–72.

52 The phrase was popularly used by Mahbubani, 'The West and the Rest'.

53 Sidahmed and Ehteshami, 'Introduction', p. 9.

54 Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*, 1993, Third edition (London Verso, 2009), p. 151.

55 Ira Lapidus, *Contemporary Islamic Movements in Historical Perspective*, Policy Papers in International Affairs, No. 18 (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California Berkeley, 1984), p. 64.

56 Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), pp 69–110. For a detailed overview of Islamic state see Sayyed Abul-Ala Maudoodi, *Political Theory of Islam* (Lahore: Markazi Maktaba Jama'at-I-Islami Pakistan, 1959). This is a translated version of an address delivered by Maududi at Lahore's Shah Chiragh Mosque in October, 1939.

57 T. N. Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 142.

order of the entire world and rebuild it in conformity with its own tenets'.[58] Scholars argue that Maududi was among the first Islamists to construct an 'Islamic political theory' whose core concept was based on god's sovereignty (*hakimiyah*) entailing that 'human beings can exercise power only in the name of Allah and in pursuit of His teachings and regulations'.[59] For Maududi, the central element of Islamic doctrine is the concept of *tawhid* (unity and oneness of god) appended with absolute obedience and total submission to god.[60] The purpose of such an Islamic state, according to Maududi and his Jamaat-e-Islami, would be to establish 'God's Government on earth '.[61] Maududi rejects Western secularism, nationalism and democracy and offers an Islamist ideology that is based on the Islamic concepts of 'submission to God', 'humanism', 'vicegerency of God' and 'theo-democracy'.[62]

In celebrating the exotic 'Islamic other' that is opposed to the 'West', postmodern academicians simply overlook the universal truth claims of Islam and the totalistic meta-narrative of Islamism; a 'meta-narrative' that postmoderns themselves negate.[63] They also fail to see the problem of what Arkoun calls 'the dogmatic closure of Islamic thought'.[64] In fact, this 'dogmatic closure' of Islamism justifies its refusal to open dialogue and engage with any ideological tradition other than Islam and, thus, makes it a self-congratulatory discourse. Similarly, the abhorrent and unapologetic view of Islamists on the issue of non-Muslims, subjugation of women and sexual minorities within Islamist discourses as one will later see in this book, is also another point of silence or complicity on the part of postmodern academicians that celebrate the Islamist opposition to the West.

In this book, I argue that the ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism are not similar across South Asia, but are contextual as they vary from a majority context in Bangladesh to that of minority context in India. Thus, contrary to the Universalist claims of Islamism, the political praxis of Islamist parties like Jamaat actually shows that its ideological articulations are particularistic with contextual specificities. I will investigate how such particularist ideological articulations of

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58 Sayyed Abul-Ala Maudoodi, *Jihad in Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1976), p. 3.

59 Sidahmed and Ehteshami, 'Introduction', p. 10.

60 Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, pp 57–58.

61 Agwani, *Islamic Fundamentalism in India*, pp 53–77.

62 Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan*, 1857–1964 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 208–223.

63 The epistemological skepticism of postmodernism hold that 'the assertion of truth claims is dogmatic and potentially totalitarian'. See Colin Hay, *Political Analysis* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 227.

64 Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, p. 3.

Jamaati Islamism in India and Bangladesh affect the varied modes of political and strategic visions of Islamism in these countries. Finally, I shall argue that the limits of Islamism are exposed by its failure to politically mobilize people behind its political project and its subsequent failure to realize an Islamic state; a state that will be an 'alternative' to both capitalism and communism that the Islamists claim to establish. Thus, one can observe a 'gap between the rhetoric of Islamic activists and the reality of Muslim polities'.[65] However, despite its inability to hegemonize the political field of contemporary India and Bangladesh, its political significance in the contemporary affairs of these countries lies in its staunch ideological critique of Western powers and what the Islamists call 'Western culture', consumerist lifestyles, its opposition to certain capitalist development projects and the neoliberal policy regime, as one will see in this book. In this respect, this critical discussion on the existing theoretical and methodological frameworks on studying Islamism will be incomplete if I do not elaborate on the unheard voices of the women's question within Islamist discourses and the debate around Islamic feminism.

Unheard voices of women's question in Islamism: Debating Islamic feminism

The women's question within Islamist discourses is unheard or at best relatively less emphasized as one will later see in this book. However, to situate the women's question within Islamist discourses, one needs to first analyze the debate around women's rights in Islam and the emerging school of Islamic feminism. The debate on *Islamic Feminism* reflects the points of differences among feminist scholars on the questions of gender empowerment, sexuality and seclusion vis-à-vis Islamism. In short, it represents a debate between two major groups of feminists and two contested positions on the question of gender within Islamist discourses, particularly related to the mode of strategy for women's liberation within Islamic societies. The liberal, Marxist and humanist feminist positions around Western Eurocentric discourses assert that the struggle against religious prohibitions and discriminatory rights within the religion of Islam are essential and are an ineluctable path of emancipation for women in Muslim societies, whereas the defensive and apologetic strategy of Islamic feminism recommends a return towards Islam to claim those women's rights enumerated in Islam by a re-reading of Sharia texts. Such a stance also critically poses questions of how Islamic feminism gets its logic of articulation from postmodern discourses of celebrating 'Islamic authenticity' by claiming/identifying the *veil* as 'a tool of

[65] Lawrence, *Defenders of God*, p. 189.

empowerment', how it denies viewing women's subordination as an offshoot of Islamist ideology and how the discourses of postmodernism actually echo and overlap the discourses of Islamism.

On the much debated topic of Islam and women, the dominant view suggests that Islamism is opposed to women's political and legal rights, education, participation in the wage labour force and family planning in the name of restoring 'traditional' Islamic gender relations.[66] In many cases, conservative Islamists commonly held 'patriarchal views on gender relations and the position of women in society' besides constructing the idea of an 'Islamic economy' that is not fundamentally different from the model of market economy in the context of liberalization and privatization.[67] A much debated issue of women and Islam and, subsequently, the intrinsic patriarchal nature of Islam is brilliantly analyzed by Ghada Karmi by situating Islam and its Quranic worldview in the broader socio-historical context of the Arab world.[68] Karmi points out that in the pre-Islamic world, there are instances of matriarchal/matrilineal practices where Arab females were more independent. As Karmi suggests, 'it seems that there were two prevailing trends in the marriage customs of the sixth and seventh centuries which formed the historical backdrop against which Islam was born; one of which was matrilineal and the other patrilineal. These two systems were diametrically opposed to each other and also implied fundamental differences in the position of women and the structure of social relations'.[69] Karmi further argues that there is a profound paradox and contradiction in Quranic verses that situates the place of woman in the Islamic discourses.

In presenting a totalistic worldview of Islamism, the Islamist reading of Qur'an seems to be focussing much on the legalist and regulatory content of the text, which in any way is less featured in the text itself. This precisely 'had serious consequences for the position of women in Muslim societies, which are still a subject to marriage, divorce and custody laws which discriminate against them. Qur'anic precepts on the position of women should be seen as a function of the social dynamics and imperatives obtained in the Arabia of the seventh century. They should, therefore, not have been used to determine the fate of women up to the present time'.[70]

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66 Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, 'On the Modernity, Historical Specificity, and International Context of Political Islam', in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork, eds. *Political Islam: Essays from Middle East Report* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1997), p. 20.

67 Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, p. 166.

68 Ghada Karmi, 'Women, Islam and Patriarchalism', in Mai Yamani, ed. *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp 69–85.

69 Ibid, p. 78.

70 Ibid, p. 81.

Fatima Mernissi points out that Islamism is a political assertion of urban middle class male Islamic identity in the wake of rapid social changes threatening the existing relations with regard to authoritarian power structures, especially between genders, and a response to the problems of boundary produced by the intrusions of colonialism, new technology, consumerism and economic dependency.[71] Scholars have argued that 'Islamic fundamentalism has long been associated with greater or lesser degrees of oppression of women'.[72] In many cases, conservative Islamists commonly hold 'patriarchal views on gender relations and the position of women in society'.[73]

Feminists further point out that the Islamist discourse is essentially patriarchal in nature and it tries to reinforce patriarchy, through the construction of social norms based on veiling and exclusion, in disempowering women and denying them the right to comprehend and interpret Islamic laws. In addition, the Islamist discourse is also characterized by favourable laws supporting the norms of polygamy, honour killings in case of female adultery or rape, divorce, domestic violence and custody of children after separation as concerns of men, where women are marginal and are subjugated to the wishes and cause of men.[74] Religious ideologies as such are based on an ideological justification of the authority of patriarchal control over women[75] and Islamism is no exception to that general rule. A few radical feminists argue that Islam is intrinsically patriarchal and inimical to women's rights.[76] While responding to the debates around the issue of a ban on polygamy, the Jamaat-e-Islami that takes the most militant stand on any change in the Muslim Personal Law, is fundamentally opposed to it[77] as the Jamaat holds that such a move would be 'the first step in the direction of erasing every symbol of a separate Muslim culture in

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71 Fatima Mernissi, 'Muslim Women and Fundamentalism', *Middle East Report*, No. 153 (July–August 1988), pp 8–11.

72 Haleh Afsar, 'Islam and Feminism: An Analysis of Political Strategies', in Mai Yamani, ed. *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 197.

73 Ismail, *Rethinking Islamist Politics*, p. 166.

74 See Haleh Afsar, *Islam and Feminisms: An Iranian Case-Study* (Basingstoke, New York: Macmillan, 1998).

75 Amrita Chhachi, 'The State, Religious Fundamentalism and Women: Trends in South Asia', *Economic and Political Weekly*, (18 March 1989), pp 567–578.

76 See Fatna A. Sabbah, *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious,* trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (New York: Pergamon Press, 1984); Mai Ghoussoub, 'Feminism—or the Eternal Masculine—in the Arab World', *New Left Review*, No. 161 (January-February 1987), pp 3–13.

77 Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 220.

India'.[78] On the issue of women's question, the Jamaat-e-Islami's principal demand is for 'a blanket adoption of the Shari'ah as a way of regulating women's lives'.[79]

In recent decades, a new brand of Islamic feminism is being shaped that 'takes Islam, not the West, as its source of legitimacy'.[80] Islamic feminism is an attempt to re-read the old Islamic texts of Sharia to find out Islamic solutions for modern problems of women's rights in the Muslim world. It is marked by an oppositional agenda of resisting Western values, while, in tone and tenor, it is apologetic in nature due to its attempt to explain the questions of gender and women's rights by resorting to a re-reading of Sharia texts.[81] Many Islamic feminists try to resist the 'racist and demonizing perceptions of Islam and its eternally gender-oppressive character that come close to denying the overpowering influence of religious practices and traditions altogether'.[82] The position of Islamic feminism is articulated in the endorsement of an 'Islamic path to women's emancipation as the only viable, home-grown and culturally appropriate alternative to feminism, Marxism and liberal humanist project'.[83]

According to Moghissi, Islamic feminism proposes that a return to Islam can 'guarantee women's rights in marriage and family matters and in the management of their own money'.[84] Islamic feminists try to argue that one can have better prospects for the lives of women and can gain positive rights for women by a radical reinterpretation of the Islamic law where one can locate a plurality of voices ranging from the traditionalist interpretation of Sharia, marked by gender inequality to the neo-traditionalist strategy of gender balance, and the modernist assertion of gender equality, all of which take refuge in Islamic law but make different claims on the question of gender.[85]

The Islamic feminists often see the veil as a 'tool of empowerment'[86] for the Muslim woman. The politics and policies surrounding veil are often regarded

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78 Ibid. Also see *Radiance*, 4 December 1966.

79 Ayesha Jalal, 'The Convenience of Subservience: Women and the State of Pakistan', in Deniz Kandiyoti, ed. *Women, Islam and the State* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 92.

80 Ziba Mir-Hosseini, 'Stretching the Limits: A Feminist Reading of the *Shari'a* in Post-Khomeini Iran', in Mai Yamani, ed. *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 315.

81 For a detailed discussion on this issue see Mir-Hosseini, 'Stretching the Limits', in Yamani, ed. *Feminism and Islam*, pp 285–319.

82 Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 40.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid, p. 41.

85 See Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Islam and Gender: The Religious Debate in Contemporary Iran* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999).

86 Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp 41–42.

as violent coercive mechanisms of both the modernist project of unveiling and the Islamist imposition of veil.[87] However, unlike feminists like Tohidi, who maintains a balance between a critique of both Muslim modernism and Islamism, most Islamic feminists assert that the adoption of veil can be seen as a 'bold act of defiance against the social corruption of a Western-oriented market economy and consumerism'[88] because 'the fundamentalist push for a complete re-segregation of the gendered space is an answer to all the complexities, ambiguities and instabilities of the nationalist project'.[89] In the discourse of Islamic feminists, 'Muslim women represent an indigenous non-Westoxicated model of liberated women'.[90] For Muslim feminists like Tohidi, the Islamic model of veil, 'in a time of cultural uncertainty and social complexity, and at the stage of personality development in which the quest for identity is the central psychological issue, served as both a reassuring and anxiety-reducing mechanism. In a sense, this was a puritanical attempt by educated reformist women to restore an Islamic identity distinct from the "Westoxicated, commoditized" women'.[91]

Thus, Moghissi argues that Islamic feminism does not see 'female seclusion, sex segregation and the Islamic veil, traditional or revived, as symbols of male control over female sexuality and moral conduct, emblematic of the objectification of women'.[92] Therefore, Islamic feminists see veil as 'a "creative alternative" developed by women to increase their participation in public spaces'.[93] This adoption of veil as a socio-political strategy of educated women in Muslim societies is a positive mechanism of participation in public affairs and can be seen as 'a feminism true to its society's traditions'.[94] According to Islamic feminists, 'these are women who chose to define their identity in Islamic terms

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87 Nayereh Tohidi, 'Modernity, Islamization, and women in Iran', in Valentine M. Moghadam, ed. *Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies* (London: Zed Books, 1994), pp 124–126.

88 Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 41.

89 Lama Abu-Odeh, 'Crimes of Honour and the Construction of Gender in Arab Societies', in Mai Yamani, ed. *Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p. 188.

90 Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 41.

91 Tohidi, 'Modernity, Islamization, and women in Iran', pp 122–123.

92 Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 41. Also see Homa Hoodfar, 'The Veil in Their Minds and On Our Heads: The Persistence of Colonial Images of Muslim Women', *Resources for Feminist Research*, Vol. 22, No. 3–4 (Winter 1993), pp 3–10.

93 Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 41.

94 Fadwa el-Guindi, 'Feminism Comes of Age in Islam', in Suha Sabbagh, ed. *Arab Women: Between Defiance and Restraint* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1996), p. 161.

and developed a consciousness that is Islamic in character. Their Islamic dress, so mystifying and misunderstood in the West, is in fact an anti-consumerist claim for their right to modesty, to control of their own bodies, to sexual space and moral privacy'.[95]

Islamic feminists argue that the concerns of Western feminism around the issues of Western dress and secularism in the Muslim world was essentially an elitist discourse of urban-middle classes, while the discourse of veil in Islamism tries to address the same goals of feminism without compromising the native culture, besides democratizing mainstream culture at the grass-root level by widening the demographic profile and erasing class-biasness in terms of adopting Islamic dress as a 'uniform' and, thus, giving women a degree of social mobility, signalling a determination to move forward towards modernity.[96] While seeking solidarity between postcolonial feminism and the discourse of veil, many Islamic feminists argue that adoption of veil is a political act as it empowers women in the streets by giving social respectability, and is almost an immediate solution to sexual harassment.[97]

The typical position of Islamic feminism is that women's subordination in Muslim societies can be neither simply regarded as an offshoot of Islamic ideology and practice, nor as a result of processes of global socio-economic transformation and the Universalist premises of feminist theory produced in the West.[98] In this respect, Deniz Kandiyoti problematizes both the concepts of patriarchy and Islam while arguing that one should resist looking at these concepts as homogenous and essentialist and that 'patrilineal–patrilocal complex for women' and control and subordination of women under 'classic patriarchy' is not peculiar only to Islam but can be seen in other organized religions and cultures like Hinduism and Confucianism. She further argues that even in the West, one can notice the attempts 'to reinstate an older patriarchal bargain' of New Right and anti-feminist movement under the garb of familism.[99] In another work, she proposes that while

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95 Ibid.

96 Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 225.

97 Lama Abu-Odeh, 'Post-Colonial Feminism and the Veil: Thinking the Difference', *Feminist Review*, No. 43, (Spring 1993), pp 26–37.

98 Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh, 'Ethnocentrism and Socialist-Feminist Theory', *Feminist Review*, No. 20 (Summer 1985), pp 23–47; Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer 1987), pp 317–338.

99 Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Islam and Patriarchy: A Comparative Perspective', in Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron, eds. *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp 23–42.

looking at a closer relationship between Islam and women, and particularly how the state policies and legislation affects women in the Muslim world, one should first make an account of a combination of factors like varied forms of political projects of modern nation–states, their specific nationalist histories and the position of Islam vis-à-vis diverse nationalisms that are practiced in different Muslim states.[100] But in most cases, the Islamists are distanced from political power, rather they are in opposition and, in some cases, they have limited influence like the Jamaat-e-Islami in South Asia. Therefore, in studying those Islamist movements that are not in power, one has to look at the specific Islamist discourses, and their perception of gender and women's rights, and not particularly about the policies of the state.

If one closely follows the arguments of the postmodern celebration of Islamic authenticity and the theoretical framework of Islamic feminism, we can notice some remarkable similarities between Islamism and postmodernism.

Moghissi forcefully argues that 'in the post-colonial, anti-Orientalist scholarship on Islam and gender what we are increasingly confronted with is a convergence of the seemingly radical, anti-representational view with a fundamentalist conservatism. This convergence represents a style of thought shaped by postmodern relativism, which dominates the European and, particularly, the North American academy, as a style benchmarked by an uncritical pursuit of the culturally exotic and the untouched. At philosophical and political levels, there is a profound failure to draw a clear distinction between the position of fundamentalists and that of a large number of anti-representational post-colonial feminists. At a tremendous cost to women in the Islamic world, concepts of universality, equality, modernity and human rights are lost, as the differences between the vocabulary and the stance of these two positions become less visible'.[101]

By taking a position against both the consumerist model of feminity and Islamic feminism, Nawal El Saadawi remarks that both 'veiling and nakedness are two sides of the same coin. Both mean that women are bodies without a mind and should be covered or uncovered to suit national or international capitalist interests'.[102] Therefore, on the issue of women's question in the ideology of Islamism, one must distance themselves from the analytical vantage points of both Islamic feminism and the Western model of consumerist feminity. Since this study is largely concerned with the conceptualization of Islamist ideology, in this respect, I will only focus on the concept of women's question in the Islamist discourses of Jamaat-e-Islami. In analyzing the Islamist ideological articulations,

[100] See Deniz Kandiyoti, ed. *Women, Islam and the State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991).

[101] Moghissi, *Feminism and Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 47.

[102] Nawal El Saadawi, *The Nawal El Saadawi Reader* (London: Zed Books, 1997), pp 138–140.

I will also show the complex nuances of Islamist positions on varied issues. In this regard, let me first briefly point out the peculiarities of two case studies, the Jamaat in India and Bangladesh, and outline the modes of data gathering and methodological overview of this study.

Case selection, data gathering and methodological overview

The subtitle of the book, *Jamaat-e-Islami in Contemporary India and Bangladesh,* is intended to point out the similarities and differences between the Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat's position on different politico-ideological issues such as neoliberalism, imperialism, secularism, Islamic state and democracy, cultural globalization, etc. For example, firstly, the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami is opposed to the very notion of secularism, while the Indian Jamaat is more sympathetic towards secularism.[103] Secondly, the Bangladeshi Jamaat has a vision to establish an Islamic state, while the Indian Jamaat has deleted all references to Islamic state from its Constitution.[104] JIH's acceptance of Indian secularism, besides dropping the idea of establishing an Islamic state in India from its political programme, is not justified along the lines of Islamic theological defence and authentic Islamic arguments in favour of 'liberal citizenship' in a non-Muslim country,[105] but on the grounds of realistic and tactical political considerations like the minority status of Muslims in India and the threat of *Hindutva* to the Muslim minorities.

In addition to the existing literature, I shall show in this book how the Indian Jamaat views *Hindutva* as a greater 'enemy' to fight with than neoliberalism, whereas for Bangladeshi Jamaat, secularism is a greater 'enemy' to fight with than neoliberalism. However, in both the cases of India and Bangladesh, Islamism is opposed to 'Western cultural globalization', which, according to them, propagates 'consumerism', 'atheism', 'blasphemy', 'homosexuality', 'unrestricted sexual freedom', 'pornography', etc.

Also, Bangladesh Jamaat is a political party that takes part in the parliamentary democratic politics, whereas the Indian Jamaat restricts itself to what it calls

[103] Yoginder Sikand, *Islam, Caste and Dalit-Muslim Relations in India* (New Delhi: Global Media Publications, 2004), pp 99–100; Mushir-ul-Haq, *Islam in Secular India* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1972), pp 6–21.

[104] For major points of differences between the Indian and Bangladeshi *Jamaat-e-Islami*, see Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', pp 501–506; Grare, *Political Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*.

[105] For an eloquent exposition of 'Islamic affirmations of liberal citizenship' in a non-Muslim country see Andrew F. March, *Islam and Liberal Citizenship: The Search for an Overlapping Consensus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp 163–258.

'religious' and 'cultural' activities, concentrating mainly on publishing and disseminating literature on Islam, promoting Islamic awareness and Muslim interests and attempting to reach out to non-Muslims with the message of Islam. In this regard, in my comparison, it is implicit that the Jamaat will respond to national political contexts and regional specificities within a country, and, thus, its ideological expressions might change accordingly.

In writing the book, valuable information and qualitative data have been collected from primary sources that include the Jamaat-e-Islami Constitution, Jamaat policy and programme, press statements, election manifestos, organizational literature, political documents like policy resolutions of Jamaat and press releases of Jamaat in both India and Bangladesh. Secondary literature comprising academic books and journal articles has also informed this study. Some information has been collected from Internet sources and online newspaper archives of dailies and magazines to follow the organizational activities of Jamaat in the recent past. Selected interviews of members and the leadership of Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh have been conducted for this research. Interviews have been conducted in the Indian cities of Delhi, Lucknow, Kolkata and Kozhikode and places like Dhaka and Chittagong in Bangladesh. The above-mentioned cities have been chosen for conducting field interviews and collecting other important information sources like Jamaat pamphlets and organizational posters, because of the relatively easy access to and organizational presence of Jamaat in these places. The particular cities in India and Bangladesh have also been chosen to give balance between national and regional perspectives of Jamaat-e-Islami leadership, activists and ordinary members.

The national leadership of JIH based in Delhi allowed me to take video interviews and spoke in English, Urdu and Hindi. On the contrary, the state leadership of Jamaat in Kerala, based in Kozhikode spoke in English and a couple of interviews were translated in English from Malayalam by a Jamaat activist. The state leadership of Jamaat in West Bengal, based in Kolkata, spoke in Bengali. Both in Kozhikode and Kolkata, the Jamaat leadership and activists allowed me to take handwritten notes during interviews. The state leadership of Jamaat in Uttar Pradesh, based in Lucknow, only allowed me to collect organizational literature and selective Jamaat pamphlets and posters. The Bangladesh Jamaat leadership and Bangladesh Jamaat intellectuals in the cities of Dhaka and Chittagong only allowed me to take handwritten interview notes and no video recording. Apart from giving a few interviews, both the Indian and Bangladesh Jamaat leadership allowed me to collect organizational literature, election manifestos and pamphlets of the Jamaat-e-Islami.

I believe that to comprehensively understand the ideological articulations of any political formation or group, one needs to have an eclectic approach. Moreover, from a normative standpoint, one can argue that politics in general and political ideologies in particular should be studied from multiple perspectives to get a comprehensive overview of the subject of study. Thus, in this book, I favour a hybridization of approaches by combining various methods for a comprehensive study.

The present book is surely a case study in the first place, related to the specificity and complexity of the particular case of *Jamaat-e-Islami*, its ideological articulations and its mode of politics with reference to space (India and Bangladesh) and time (contemporary period of neoliberalism, particularly from the late 1970s onwards in Bangladesh and early 1990s onwards in India).

Secondly, I undertake both textual and content analyses of primary sources. The content analysis method helps to identify and distinguish the specific concepts that are of primary concern to the Islamists. With regard to textual analysis of the primary sources, it is important to keep in mind that Jamaat disseminates English and several regional language translations of some Urdu texts in India, and Bengali translations of the same in Bangladesh, given the fact that a large number of its members are not versed in Urdu. So, I primarily rely on English and Bengali translations of Urdu texts apart from the original English and Bengali literature of Jamaat. Since the English and Bengali texts are themselves translated by the publishing houses owned by the Jamaat and are sold and distributed as organizational literature, so I consider them as reliable translations. Besides these, analysis of selected interviews of Jamaat leadership, activists and common members has also been done to look at the current discourses within the organization on a range of ideological and political issues of both national and international importance. The interviews also helped to look at new ideological positions/shifts on a particular issue that is not yet documented in the organizational literature, and thus, have complemented the textual analysis.

Thirdly, this book concentrates on the *comparative* study of Islamist ideological expressions as it contrasts the ideological positions of Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh. In comparing the ideological articulations of Jamaat, I rely on conceptual and discourse analysis than merely a descriptive narration or a class analysis. The advantages of conceptual analysis in the study of ideologies is that it focusses on the peculiar mode of 'thinking encapsulated in ideologies, not merely for what it masks' as one finds in the Marxisant schools.[106] The overemphasis on urban lower middle classes as the core class base of Islamism by Marxisant

[106] Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p. 1.

and political economy approaches, as seen earlier in the 'Introduction', actually ignore the mobilization of various other strata of population joining the Islamist movement. In fact, the Marxisant and political economy approaches cannot convincingly explain how people, not just from urban lower middle classes, but coming from various other class and regional backgrounds join Islamist parties. This is precisely because of their strong focus on seeing Islamism as a 'class ideology' while ignoring its mass appeal and populist connotations. Therefore, the theoretical framework of 'populism' alá Laclau, is more helpful to address many of the questions that Marxisant and political economy schools fail to answer about Islamism.

Thus, without taking refuge in a class-reductionist approach, conceptual and discourse analyses helps to understand the nature of thinking and key political concepts shaping a particular ideology, its mobilizational strategies, its peculiar political rhetoric and the varied nature of political issues, which a particular ideological articulation like Islamism engages with in the contemporary globalized world. Furthermore, political mobilization is not necessarily a function of class determinism, but a combination of both class and non-class factors and an equivalential relation between different democratic demands against a common antagonistic frontier, which one will see in the case of Islamist populism in India and Bangladesh. Thus, to study Islamism from a framework of conceptual and discourse analysis would help unravel the key concepts and the use of distinct rhetoric around which the Islamist ideology is organized and strives to mobilize people behind its political project. Conceptual and discourse analyses in this respect also help to make us understand why a particular political programme is initiated by a given ideological formation in order to achieve certain political goals.

By this time, it must be clear that I am trying to engage with several theoretical formulations and research concerns. But there has to be some 'anchor' around which the treatment with various methods and approaches gives some meaning to the questions that I ask in this study. Thus, my concern is to unearth the ideological articulations of Islamism in the context of neoliberal India and Bangladesh with two conceptual formulations of 'Islamic universalism' and 'Muslim particularism' as the *foci* of the study. However, to become popular among their political constituency and to mobilize people for the Islamic Universalist agenda, Islamists need to *identify the political enemy/antagonistic frontier*. Without identifying the antagonistic frontier, political mobilization is difficult since the people can be mobilized either *against* somebody (state, capital, government, bureaucracy, rival groups/religions/communities, etc.) or in *favour* of somebody (a political agenda/project). In this respect, one will see in this book how the Islamists construct an antagonistic frontier against Western models of economic development, and

the political agents that carry forward such developmental projects and against what they call 'Western' cultural incursions. In this respect, one will see how the Islamists construct the 'West' as the non-Islamic 'other' via the Islamic concept of *jahiliya*. In this regard, one will also see how the Islamist party like Jamaat tries to combine its Islamic Universalist appeal and particularist demands for its core (Muslim) constituency. However, before discussing the issues of Islamic universalism and Muslim particularism in subsequent chapters, let me first delineate some conceptual issues on the overlap of (Islamic) religion and politics, and identify the categories of analysis with which the political ontology of Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh can be possibly understood.

Ontological engagements with Islam(ism): Identifying the categories of analysis

In this book, my differences with most existing literature on Islamism in general and Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh in particular is linked to the ontological enquiries about the overlapping boundaries of religion and politics. I believe most disciplines have a central pole of attention with Psychology being primarily concerned with the *mind*, History with *time*, Geography with *space*, Economics with *exchange*, Sociology with *organization/institutions/groups*, Biological Sciences with *living organisms*, Physical Sciences with *matter*, Linguistics with *grammar*, *language* and *rhetoric*, Anthropology with *human societies*, Law with *rules*, Philosophy with the *good life* and the existential question of *being*, Politics with *power* and *ideological worldview*, and so on. Aristotle taught us that 'man is by nature a political animal'.[107] In this regard, religious communities and religious institutions constituted by human associations can also be political associations. As Robert Dahl suggests, a citizen encounters politics in every humanly made organization including the church as 'politics is an unavoidable fact of human existence'.[108] In this respect, the dimensions and boundaries of politics and religion seem to be fuzzy and artificial as the Western modernist enlightenment tried to bifurcate between the church and the state/politics. Moreover, if politics is primarily concerned with the 'good for man',[109] or a political system is defined in terms of 'control, influence, power or

[107] Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. and with an introduction, notes, and glossary by Carnes Lord (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 37.

[108] Robert A. Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, Fourth edition (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1984), p. 1.

[109] Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics* with a commentary by H. H. Joachim and D. A. Rees, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951) p. 26.

authority'[110] or the space of the 'political' is 'antagonism',[111] then the meaning of religion certainly can be expanded on. In the following chapters, one will see how Islamism, by rearticulating the political dimensions of Islamic religion, seeks to promise 'good' life and prescribes what is 'good for man', strives for political 'power', tries to 'control'/'influence' human subjects, enjoys 'authority' and constructs 'antagonistic frontiers' by grounding its politics on the basis of an ideological worldview.

As far as the political dimensions of religion are concerned, the very notion of organized religion in general is essentially 'political'. That is to say, the possibilities and potentialities of the 'political' are embedded within organized religion in general. Most organized religions have a sense of 'good' and 'bad', the concept of 'evil' and 'devil' as opposed to 'virtues' and 'purity', the demarcation between morally and ethically correct and incorrect, and so on. In other words, the duality of 'inclusivity' and 'exclusivity' is the characteristic of most organized religions. Thus, most organized religions create an internal frontier of antagonism or have multiple forms of antagonisms with the constructions of 'enemies' and the 'other(s)'. These constructions of antagonistic frontiers lead to the *conditions of possibilities* for an emergent conflict, which is basically the starting point of politics. So, religion is open to political manipulation or maneuvering as there is already/always a political space available, embedded within the very idea of organized religion. In this sense, then, the separation between religion and politics and demarcating the boundaries of religious versus political realms is contestable. Islam is not exceptional to this peculiar characteristic of internal frontier of antagonism embedded within religion. Thus, Islamist ideology or Islamism asserts the forms of political thinking and political opinions by re-articulating Islamic traditions by extending/expanding the political frontiers and political space of antagonism within the religion of Islam. Therefore, the arguments of 'politicization' and 'ideologization' of religion in most academic, journalistic and polemical literature dealing with Islam(ism) is naïve and unimpressive, precisely since, from the very beginning, the constitution of most organized religions is *political*. This political element within organized religion gets support from the *missionary aspect* of organized religion to grow further, to spread religion across the world and, hence, enhance the number of its members belonging to its own 'authentic community'.

The 'missionary aspect' of preaching religion to include more people inside its fold, while struggling with 'other' competing ideological worldviews including *other religions,* is related to the questions of *empowerment* and *relative strength* of

[110] Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*, p. 10.

[111] Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), pp 1–7.

religion, which are political questions, connected to the very concept of power and the desire of a religion to be more powerful than any 'other' entity. In that case the normative question of how religion 'ought' to be or whether religion *should* be 'political' might encounter an ontological question: whether the *existence* of religion is essentially political or whether the political (id)entity is constitutive of religion, making it difficult to segregate politics from religion. To ignore the political identity of religion and to distinguish between religion and politics by equating religion with the private sphere and politics with the public sphere[112] is, therefore, a futile task and would be a continuation of the erroneous construct of the mainstream of Western Enlightenment.[113] This Enlightenment separation between religion and politics has in fact shown its limits with the return/re-turn of religion haunting the political spheres of even modern Western countries and certainly in contemporary Muslim societies. So, if religion exists in society, then the possibilities of political challenge of religion also exist.

In a pre-modern world, religion seemed to be a worldview and in that sense played its role as a political ideology. Interestingly, it is still an ideology for a significant section of the world population with the emergence of 'religious fundamentalism' among most organized religions.[114] From here, one can ask, why religion is still regarded as a political ideology by many, even if there are competing modern ideologies and even if the dominance of Western modernity has tried to vilify it as an 'anti-modern', 'backward', 'regressive' entity. Is this because religion always offers certain *political* visions so that it can be used by a political agency whenever it needs/fits to do so? Thus, it depends exclusively on the particular political actors, how and whether they are using the space of the 'political' that is inherent in most organized religions. In the particular case of Islamism, which is the prime focus of this research,

[112] Such distinction between 'private' and 'public' was also challenged by Feminism. See Freeden, 'Feminism: The Recasting of Political Language', in *Ideologies and Political Theory*, pp 488–525.

[113] For Mulhall, the negation of religion, god or any other external being influencing or controlling *human actions* is discarded by the mainstream project of Enlightenment. '[T]he Enlightenment conception of human self-sufficiency', and 'extra-individual structural influences are themselves humanly comprehensible (identifiable and analysable by such thinkers as Marx, Freud or Darwin); are in many cases the result of human action; and are, anyway, always in principle open to alteration, or at least amelioration, by collective human action. In short, even if the source of our problems lies beyond the individual wrongdoer, it does not lie beyond the human race as such; and so its resolution also lies within human minds'. See Stephen Mulhall, *Philosophical Myths of the Fall* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 9.

[114] The five volumes of *Fundamentalism Project* referred earlier is a detailed study of religious fundamentalism among Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists.

one will see how it is only an expansion of those political fronts embedded in the religion of Islam. To be precise, the way in which Islamism organizes different sectors of population under the banner or in the name of Islam by expanding the political frontiers of Islamic religion against an antagonistic frontier and what are the limits of such a project of Islamist mobilization, which I call the project of 'Islamist populism' in our times, are my focal concerns in this book.

The existence of religion in our times is interestingly opposed to a particular tradition of the modernist enlightenment claiming the ideas of the 'death of God'[115] or religion as 'opium of the people'[116] or 'illusion'[117] or 'god delusion'[118] and an attempt to distinguish between 'modernist reason' and 'religious faith'.[119] How can we account for the existence of 'pre-modern'/'anti-modern' *religion* in modern and postmodern contexts of incredible advancement of scientific and technological revolution and in an age of 'human rationality', 'secular values' and 'anthropocentric society'? That is to say, how can we explain the existence of

[115] The proclamation that 'god is dead' was given by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in the nineteenth century. See Book 3, Sections 108 and 125 and Book 5, Section 343 of Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff, poems trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp 109, 120, 199. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common with an introduction by Nicholas Davey (London: Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 1997), pp 5–6, p. 75.

[116] Marx argued: 'Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the "*illusory*" happiness of the people is the demand for their "*real*" happiness'. See Karl Marx, *Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Marxists CD Archive, 2002).

[117] Although religion was equated with 'illusion' even by Marx, the psychoanalytic treatment of 'religion' and 'God' as 'illusions'—a kind of belief, 'when a wishfulfilment is a prominent factor in its motivation, and in doing so we disregard its relations to reality, just as the illusion itself sets no store by verification' has been significantly dealt in Sigmund Freud, 'The Future of an Illusion', in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (London: Vintage Books, 1995).

[118] Richard Dawkins' scientific engagement popularized an atheist plea in his complete debunking of those faiths and philosophical arguments that believes in the existence of God. See Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 2006 (London: Black Swan, 2007).

[119] A discussion on this attempt of distinguishing between the philosophical 'idolatry' project of modernist reason and religious faith by the philosophers of enlightenment and the religious discourse of Christianity to justify its beliefs and tenets on the basis of 'real existence of God' is enumerated in Stephen Mulhall, *Faith and Reason* (London: Duckworth, 1994).

religion and, by extension, religious ideologies in a world of globalized capitalism, when 'seminal social thinkers of the nineteenth century, like Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Sigmund Freud, believed that religion would gradually fade in importance and cease to be significant with the advent of industrial society'.[120] This story can be told in various ways. One can be the psychoanalytical explanation of the 'return of the repressed;' religion taking *revenge* against its repressor – the modernist enlightenment project of secularism. But before widely using the (psycho-)analytical explanation of religion as 'return of the repressed',[121] there is an important caveat to keep in mind about the nature of repression of religion in both Western and Muslim societies. As Dipesh Chakrabarty argues, '[o]ne empirically knows of no society in which humans have existed without gods and spirits accompanying them. Although the God of monotheism may have taken a few knocks – if not actually "died" – in the nineteenth century, European story of "the disenchantment of the world", the gods and other agents inhabiting practices of so-called "superstition" have never died anywhere'.[122] Thus, when I use the idea of religion being 'repressed', I mean religion relegated to the private sphere and not its complete abolition or death. As C. Wright Mills has argued that '[o]nce the world was filled with the sacred – in thought, practice and institutional form. After the Reformation and the Renaissance, the forces of modernization swept across the globe and secularization, a corollary historical process, loosened the dominance of the sacred. In due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether except, possibly, *in the private realm*'.[123] Religion was certainly an acknowledged political ideology and in many cases a

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[120] Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 3.

[121] From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, the paradoxical nature and moments of failure of repression are disclosed into the fact that what was repressed is revealed but in a distorted form and thus the very act of repression invites the 'return of the repressed'. As Freud says, '[R]epression demands a persistent expenditure of force, and if this were to cease the success of the repression would be jeopardized, so that a fresh act of repression would be necessary…[w]ith a return to waking life the repressive cathexes which have been drawn in are once more sent out'. See Freud, 'Repression', in *The Freud Reader*, p. 572. In another instance, Freud proclaims: 'All phenomena of symptom-formation can be fairly described as "the return of the repressed". The distinctive character of them, however, lies in the extensive distortion the returning elements have undergone, compared with their original form'. See Sigmund Freud, 'The Return of the Repressed', in *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Katherine Jones (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 164.

[122] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, 2000, New edition (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 16.

[123] C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp 32–33.

hegemonic political ideology in a pre-modern world and still continues to be a political ideology. With the advent of European capitalist modernity, religion was increasingly relegated to the private sphere and the secularist project dominated the political/public sphere. Therefore, religion slowly became marginalized as an influential political ideology and was unable to express itself as an ideological guide to the secular modernist political project and, hence, became repressed within the boundary of private religious freedom that it gets from secularism, often out of sympathy or as a sort of concession/provision to it. This *humiliation* of religion by modern secularism had its own limits when the secularist project itself became exhausted to accommodate the democratic socio-economic and political demands of the *people*. It is at this crisis moment of secularism that religious ideologies got a chance to challenge the secular political order as a 'return of the repressed'. In this global context of 'crisis of political secularism'[124], Islamism has been described as a 'return of the repressed'.[125] In this book, one will see the Islamist project as 'disenchantment with the secular' and its simultaneous limits in resisting the *secular*.

I will, next, argue that the return of the 'political religion' can be explained in socio-historical terms and dynamics of global politics where a political void was created after the collapse of socialism as a protest discourse against capitalism, while religion became an 'available' candidate to fill up that *vacant space of protest* against capitalist *status quo*. Thus, when the internal contradiction between capitalism and socialism within the discourses of Western modernity has temporarily resulted in a capitalist *status quo* as a monopoly winner, at least in the present conjuncture, religion comes from 'outside' the realm of modernity as a pre-modern entity to articulate the discontents of modernity with a new protest discourse against the capitalist power bloc. In this regard, Islamism has not been described as a 'religious discourse, but a political one'[126] to 'struggle (against) inequities of modern life to fight with full moral force for economic justice, equality and social harmony' and 'to seriously challenge the orthodoxy of a "free" market' and 'the hegemony of neoliberalism within the global economy'.[127] Therefore, Islamism has been seen as a 'protest ideology' that articulates 'political resistance to the postcolonial order'.[128] Those who construe Islamism as a 'protest ideology' view it as 'a creative space for political articulations of protest against present inequities of power'[129]

[124] Rajeev Bhargava, 'Political Secularism: Why it is needed and what can be learnt from its Indian version', in Geoffrey Brahm Levey and Tariq Modood, eds. *Secularism, Religion and Multicultural Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp 82–109.

[125] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, pp 1–6.

[126] Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror*, p. 43.

[127] Ibid, p. 50.

[128] Ibid, p. 45

[129] Ibid, pp 50–51.

at the international level. Whereas, within Muslim states, it is seen 'as a discourse of political opposition (against the regimes of) corrupt power elites, nominally Muslim but ardently Western-materialist in their personal consumption, catering to foreign interests over domestic needs'.[130] In many academic works, Islamism has often been portrayed as a 'resistance in an ideological age',[131] for Muslims consider it as 'a third world ideology of protest'.[132] Thus, Islamic identity-based movements often emerge as an assertion and violent revolt 'against the destructive effects of really existing capitalism and the unfinished, truncated and deceptive modernity that goes along with it'.[133] This aspect of 'Islamist protest' against the existing *status quo* also leads to the Islamist *rejection* of Western ideologies, as pointed out earlier by the academic literature discussed so far. Thus, in this study, one will see that Islamism articulates itself as a protest discourse, and at the same time it also asserts to *reject* both neoliberal and leftwing projects while using the rhetoric of an Islamic 'alternative'. One will also see how the 'protest discourse' of Islamism is used as a political tactic to *negotiate* with the power bloc to achieve certain political demands.

Thirdly, the existence of Islamism can be explained by the logic of a new hegemonic politics of neoliberal capitalism where religion first becomes a protest discourse and then after securing itself in the power bloc, it serves the interests of neoliberalism. The discontents of the current phase of neoliberal capitalism has exposed its limits with a new crisis, owing much to an economic agenda of the global power elites that are incapable of fulfilling the democratic demands of vast sections of population and is, thus, facing a new challenge of legitimacy. Religious articulation as a form of politico-ideological articulation can itself be a tool of both political mobilization and legitimacy for sustaining the neoliberal *status quo*, when a crisis in the neoliberal power bloc with secular political orientations occurs, due to its inability to represent the interests of vast majority of population. We have seen such a politicio-ideological articulation of religious politics in the form of *Hindutva* in India as a tool of both political mobilization and legitimacy for sustaining the neoliberal *status quo*.[134] I shall argue how Islamism, at times, also carries forward

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[130] Ibid, p. 47.

[131] Beverly Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Fundamentalism since 1945* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 89.

[132] Lawrence, *Defenders of God*, p. 229.

[133] Amin, *Eurocentrism*, p. 71.

[134] Shampa Biswas, 'To Be Modern, but in the "Indian" Way: Hindu Nationalism', in Mary Ann Tétreault & Robert A. Denemark, eds. *Gods, Guns, & Globalization: Religious Radicalism and International Political Economy* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2004), pp 107–134; Aijaz Ahmad, *On Communalism and Globalization: Offensives of the Far Right* (New Delhi: Three Essays Collective, 2002).

a neoliberal agenda in Bangladesh. Thus, I shall argue that when a pro-secular neoliberalism is unable to justify the existing socio-economic and political order under capitalism, religion becomes the source of refuge for the neoliberal power bloc to play its game of hegemony. Since neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh is characterized with a number of unresolved problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment, it has the tendency to overcome its crisis by mobilizing 'people' behind its project with a religious rhetoric. Thus, neoliberalism itself can give legitimacy to religion in the political sphere. On the contrary, religion can be accommodated within the structural logic of neoliberalism while being able to articulate itself in the language that serves the interests of neoliberalism. Thus, it is not surprising why the ideologies of *Hindutva*, Islamism in certain contexts, and Christian and Jewish fundamentalism, do not essentially have problems with free-market-led economic policies, while all of them have strong opposition to the concepts of collectivization, socialist principles and state intervention in major socio-economic activities.[135] In this regard, I shall later show in this book, how Islamism in Bangladesh has been, at times, a facilitator of neoliberalism where religious and 'neoliberal market fundamentalism' have complementary interests. As Pasha argues, although Islamism seeks to provide an 'alternative', it 'fits nicely into the neoliberal worldview as [t]he attitude of Islamists toward neoliberalism [with] the actual practice of reliance on a market-based civil society in the areas of self-help, welfare, education and banking suggests few political contradictions between Islamism and neoliberalism'.[136]

From the discussion above, one can identify three analytical frameworks for an ontological explanation of Islamism: (a) the psychoanalytical explanation that Islamism exists today as the 'return of the repressed' (b) the socio-historical explanation that Islamism exists today as a 'protest ideology' against global capitalism after the collapse of the anti-capitalist discourse of twentieth century state socialism, and (c) the socio-political explanation that Islamism exists today as a part of the new hegemonic politics of neoliberalism. If one follows the last two interpretations, then in a way, Islamism can articulate the politics of both the neoliberal power bloc and that of its oppressed and exploited subjects. This is because, religion in general and Islam(ism) in particular, as a discursive tradition, have space for both the power bloc and the plebs or underprivileged/underdogs. While trying to overcome its own crisis of legitimacy, the neoliberal power bloc needs ethical justifications in the name of religion to maintain its hegemony, whereas the plebian subjects also find a new emancipatory politics of resistance in

[135] Marty and Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalism Project,* Vols. 1–5.

[136] Mustapha Kamal Pasha, 'Modernity, Civil Society, and Religious Resurgence in South Asia', in Tétreault & Denemark, eds. *Gods, Guns, & Globalization*, p. 149.

religion by venting the angst emerging out of the current neoliberal dispensation. Thus, it is not surprising that from 1970s onwards, the introductory decade of neoliberalism[137] converged with the emergence of political religion in general and Islamism in particular in the Muslim world. The decade of the 1970s was also the starting point of crisis for both secularism and socialism in the global political scene in general and the Muslim world in particular, and, thus, gave religion an *available* political space in the mainstream politico-ideological discourses. In analyzing the emergence and existence of Islamism in Bangladesh, some of the above explanations might be useful. But are all of these explanations valid for Islamism in a neoliberal India where Indian Muslims, the core constituency of Islamism, form a religious minority and a subaltern group? This will be my subject of enquiry in the next chapter.

[137] Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

2

Islamism in Neoliberal India

It is amply clear from the title of the book that it deals with Islamism in *contemporary India*. But how should one define *contemporary India*? Can it be defined in terms of time period from a particular date onwards or within a larger structural problematic, which signifies a radical break, a kind of watershed that clearly marks a distinct departure from the 'past' and indeed identifies with our contemporary present. I identify the 'neoliberal dispensation' in India as a marker of 'contemporary India', which can be clearly distinguished from the pre-neoliberal phase of Indian history and politics. The major politico-ideological currents that precede the making of contemporary neoliberal India are the Nehruvian model of state-capitalism, secularism[1] and the Congress system in the 1950s and 1960s,[2] the fragmentation of the Congress system with a gradual transition to regionalization from late 1960s till mid-1980s and subsequently the rise of Mandir, Mandal and Market from late 1980s onwards, symbolically expressing the politics of majoritarian communalism, the politics of backward and lower castes and the policies of neoliberal economic reforms.[3]

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1 Donald Eugene Smith, *India as a Secular State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963). For a theoretical debate on secularism in India see Rajeev Bhargava, ed. *Secularism and its Critics* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp 177–542.

2 Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1970); Stanley A. Kochanek, *The Congress Party in India: The Dynamics of One-Party Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

3 Zoya Hasan, 'Introduction: Conflict, Pluralism and the Competitive Party System in India,' in Zoya Hasan, ed. *Parties and Party Politics in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp 1–36.

The neoliberal policy regime in India[4] is generally agreed upon as a marked departure from the earlier Nehruvian vision of nation-building. The Nehruvian model of economic development was mimicry of some socialist and liberal welfarist agenda in economic policies, emphasizing the public sector, and the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) in the realm of foreign policy. The advent of neoliberalism in India has been marked by the processes of liberalization, privatization and globalization with market-led economic policies, deregulation of the economy for foreign direct investment, retreat of the state from major economic activities[5] and greater alignment with the United States in foreign policy.[6] The neoliberal policy regime in India roughly from the 1990s onwards was characterized by disinvestment of the public sector, inadequate public expenditure in social sectors and commercialization of health and higher education, withdrawal of subsidies from agriculture, collapse of the public distribution system[7] and increasing private corporate control over natural resources including large-scale land acquisition by the entente of state and big private capital, often followed by either forced displacement of existing inhabitants or resistance by them.[8]

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4 Baldev Raj Nayar, *Globalization and Nationalism: The Changing Balance in India's Economic Policy, 1950–2000* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001) argues that the process of liberalisation actually started in the late 1970s and it gathered momentum in the 1980s and then led to the economic reforms of the 1990s.

5 Deepak Nayyar, *Liberalization and Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Amiya Kumar Bagchi, *Globalizing India: A Critique of an Agenda for Financiers and Speculators* (Calcutta: Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 1998); Amiya Kumar Bagchi, 'Indian Economic Organizations in a Comparative Perspective', in Amiya Kumar Bagchi (ed.), *Economy and Organization: Indian Institutions Under the Neoliberal Regime* (New Delhi: Sage, 1999), pp 54–60; Biplab Dasgupta, *Structural Adjustment, Global Trade and the New Political Economy of Development* (London: Zed Books, 1998); Biplab Dasgupta, *Globalisation: India's Adjustment Experience* (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2005).

6 Prakash Karat, *Subordinate Ally: The Nuclear Deal and India-US Strategic Relations* (New Delhi: LeftWord, 2007).

7 C. P. Chandrasekhar and Jayati Ghosh, *The Market that Failed: A Decade of Neoliberal Economic Reforms in India* (Delhi: Leftword, 2002); Utsa Patnaik, *The Republic of Hunger and Other Essays* (New Delhi: Three Essays Collective, 2007); Prabhat Patnaik and C. P. Chandrasekhar, 'The Indian Economy under "Structural Adjustment"', in Rahul Mukherji, ed. *India's Economic Transition: The Politics of Reforms* (New Delhi: OUP, 2007), pp 52–86; Amiya Kumar Bagchi, ed. *Economy and Organization: Indian Institutions Under the Neoliberal Regime* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999); Dasgupta, *Globalisation*.

8 Anjan Chakrabarti and Anup Kumar Dhar, *Dislocation and Resettlement in Development: From Third World to the World of the Third* (London: Routledge, 2009); Swagato Sarkar, 'Limits of Politics: Dominance and Resistance in Contemporary India' (Unpublished DPhil thesis, Department of International Development, University of Oxford, 2008).

Some commentators and government reports claim that the neoliberal phenomenon in India is characterized by agrarian crisis, growing poverty, inequality and unemployment along with a further worsening of the living conditions of marginalized and excluded groups of *poor people* constituting the working classes, peasantry, Dalits, Tribals, Muslims and Women.[9] Other commentators have very different views to argue that neoliberal economic reforms facilitated Indian economy to come out of its phase of stagnation and (s)low economic growth from the 1950s to the 1980s in order to overcome the balance of payment crisis in the early 1990s and make the system simple, transparent and efficient[10] while putting the economy on a high and steady growth trajectory from late 1990s onwards.[11] This inevitably benefitted the common people and helped poverty reduction[12] since 'the accelerated growth [was] required to banish structural mass poverty'[13] and 'massive failure to achieve rapid growth [was] the root cause to eliminate poverty'.[14]

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9 For detailed discussions and empirical data on these issues see *Report of the Expert Group on Agricultural Indebtedness* (Banking Division, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, July 2007); *Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India: A Report* (New Delhi: Government of India, November 2006), popularly known as *Sachar Committee Report* (2006); Arjun Sengupta, K. P. Kannan, G. Raveendran, 'India's Common People: Who Are They, How Many Are They and How Do They Live?', *Economic and Political Weekly* (15 March 2008), pp 49–63; Utsa Patnaik, *Global Capitalism, Deflation and Agrarian Crisis in Developing Countries* (Geneva: UNRISD, 2003); P. Sainath, *Everybody Loves a Good Drought: Stories from India's Poorest Districts* (London: Review, 1998).

10 Jagdish N. Bhagwati, *India in Transition: Freeing the Economy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Suresh D. Tendulkar and T. A. Bhavani, *Understanding Reforms: Post 1991 India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991); Montek S. Ahluwalia, 'India's Economic Reforms: An Appraisal', in Jeffrey D. Sachs, Ashutosh Varshney, Nirupam Bajpai, eds. *India in the Era of Economic Reforms* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp 26–80.

11 Arvind Panagariya, 'Transforming India', in Jagdish N. Bhagwati and Charles W. Calomiris, eds. *Sustaining India's Growth Miracle* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp 1–45; Vijay Joshi and I. M. D. Little, *India's Economic Reforms*, 1991–2001 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Kaushik Basu, 'The Indian Economy: Up to 1991 and Since', in Kaushik Basu, ed. *India's Emerging Economy: Performance and Prospects in the 1990s and Beyond* (London: MIT Press, 2004), pp 3–31.

12 Surjit Bhalla, 'Growth and Poverty in India: Myth and Reality', mimeo, presented at a Conference at Institute of Economic and Social Change, Bangalore, 17 January 2000; Manuela Ferro, David Rosenblatt, and Nicholas Stern, 'Policies for Pro-Poor Growth in India', in Kaushik Basu, ed. *India's Emerging Economy*, pp 153–181.

13 Deepak Lal, 'Economic Reforms and Poverty Alleviation', in Isher Judge Ahluwalia and I. M. D. Little, eds. *India's Economic Reforms and Development: Essays for Manmohan Singh* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 248.

14 T. N. Srinivasan, *Eight Lectures on India's Economic Reforms* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 27.

Neoliberalism in India is, however, different from the Euro-American model that has been discussed in the 'Introduction' with its own peculiarities. Successive Indian governments from early 1990s have definitely moved towards the policies of liberalization and globalization of Indian economy as well as privatization of the public sector, retreat of the state from certain welfare measures like withdrawal of subsidies in agriculture and initiatives for privatization and commercialization of health and education. However, one cannot simply argue that there is a withdrawal of the Indian state from welfarism in general. Instead, there are new forms of social policy interventions, sometimes towards targeted groups within the given population. Such targeted initiatives of the Indian government range from National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA, 2005) projects for the poor in the countryside,[15] Right to Education Act (2009) for free and compulsory education to all children between the age of 6 years and 14 years,[16] expanding the net of reservation in higher education for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) via the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006,[17] the recognition of the rights of scheduled tribes and other forest dwellers by the relevant act in 2006,[18] and providing space for access to information under public authorities for transparency and governmental accountability by the Right to Information Act (2005),[19] 'the poverty management' through micro-credit loans, 'special poverty-removal programmes' like 'direct delivery of subsidized or free food' to those below poverty line and 'free meals to children in primary schools'.[20] Thus, successive Indian governments, on the one hand, have pursued neoliberal economic policies that lopsidedly favour big capital, such as anti-labour policies like labour market reforms and anti-people verdicts by the judiciary,[21] while on the other, give doles to the poor.

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15 *The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA): Operational Guidelines*, Third edition (New Delhi: Ministry of Rural Development, 2008).

16 *The Gazette of India, Extraordinary* (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 27 August 2009).

17 *The Gazette of India, Extraordinary* (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 4 January 2007).

18 *The Gazette of India, Extraordinary* (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 2 January 2007).

19 *The Gazette of India, Extraordinary* (New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 21 June 2005).

20 Partha Chatterjee, *Lineages of Political Society: Studies in Postcolonial Democracy* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2011), pp 214–215.

21 Prabhat Patnaik, 'The Judiciary and the Empowerment of the People', *The Marxist*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (October–December 2005) [available at http://cpim.org/the-marxist accessed on 10 October 2011].

Indian neoliberalism is invariably associated with the 'primitive accumulation of capital' by introducing modern capitalist production that, in effect, displaces the primary producers such as peasants, artisans and petty manufacturers from their means of production. Simultaneously, a parallel process of what Kalyan Sanyal calls the 'reversal of primitive accumulation' is also taking place with the help of several welfare schemes of the government, international agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide some means of subsistence and alternative means of livelihood for those who have been negatively affected by the process of primitive accumulation.[22] Taking queue from Sanyal, Partha Chatterjee incisively points out that the *management* of marginalized groups (comprising the peasantry, artisans and petty producers in the informal sector) by the 'Indian ruling classes' through doles like anti-poverty programmes under conditions of electoral democracy is a given reality in contemporary India, for such doles may prevent the marginalized groups from becoming 'dangerous classes' against the state.[23] If one closely follows the Indian experience for the last two decades, India cannot be simply categorized as a classic case of what Harvey calls 'neoliberalism'. Rather, the neoliberal model in India is *mimicry* of Euro-American model of neoliberalism as I have argued in the 'Introduction'. Neoliberalism in India is, therefore, 'not quite/white' like the Euro-American model, although the *desire* of the governmental and policy-making establishment in India is to be like the Euro-American form of neoliberal states.

However, a comprehensive evaluation of neoliberal policies is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, in the present and the following chapter, I am rather interested to show how Islamism perceives neoliberalism and how it responds to major politico-ideological issues under a neoliberal policy regime in India. In the backdrop of a neoliberal context, this chapter will seek to locate Islamism as a specific politico-ideological discourse of a critique of neoliberalism, only among a *section* of Indian Muslims and not among the entire Muslim community in India. The core constituency of Islamism, i.e., Muslims, is a religious minority in India. Thus, before looking at the politico-ideological articulations of Islamism in India, it is relevant to briefly discuss the peculiarities and specificities of the Muslim question in India at present and the politico-ideological discourses among Indian Muslims.

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22 Kalyan Sanyal, *Rethinking Capitalist Development: Primitive Accumulation, Governmentality and Post-Colonial Capitalism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2007).

23 Partha Chatterjee, 'Democracy and Economic Transformation in India', *Economic and Political Weekly* (19 April 2008), pp 53–62.

Contemporary Muslim situation in neoliberal India

Historically, the rights of the religious minorities have been ignored by India's constitutional makers, which was amply evident from the Constituent Assembly debates.[24] As argued by a commentator on minority rights: '[t]here was no principled defence in the nationalist vocabulary for safeguards in the case of religious minorities. This marked a crucial shift from the colonial framework where the entitlement of minority groups to special representation and other forms of safeguards had been an established principle. The illegitimacy of safeguards for religious minorities within a broadly shared normative vocabulary was a crucial factor that facilitated their abolition during constitution making'.[25]

Therefore, the policy of affirmative action for religious minorities in the form of 'special representation' in the field of politics, education and employment in the colonial administrative system was replaced with a negation of an affirmative action policy for religious minorities in post-colonial India. As a result, the little benefits that the Indian Muslims were getting out of 'special representation' were denied in the successive post-colonial regimes. Instead, the focus on the policy of affirmative action in the name of 'positive discrimination' shifted towards 'other' excluded groups like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

If one follows education, poverty, income and employment statistics, Indian Muslims are comparably more deprived than other religious communities along with Dalits and Tribals as observed by the recent Sachar Report. Although the Sachar Report has limitations of not looking at Muslim landholding and representation in local panchayats,[26] the Report observes that 'while there is considerable variation in the conditions of Muslims across states, the Community exhibits deficits and deprivation in practically all dimensions of development'.[27] In fact, an expert committee report by the Central Government has recently shown that Muslims along with Dalits and Tribals are the poorest communities in India, and poverty has increased among the

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[24] Rochana Bajpai, 'Recognising Minorities: A Study of Some Aspects of the Indian Constituent Assembly Debates, 1946–1949', (Unpublished MPhil Thesis, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, 1997); Rochana Bajpai, *Debating Difference: Group Rights and Liberal Democracy in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp 31–170; Rochana Bajpai, 'Constituent Assembly Debates and Minority Rights', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 35, No. 21–22, (27 May 2000), pp 1837–1845.

[25] Rochana Bajpai, 'Values in Political Rhetoric', *Seminar*, No. 524 (April 2003), pp 16–20.

[26] Maidul Islam, 'The Plight of Indian Muslims: Some Missing Links in Sachar Committee Report and a Possible Alternative Model of Affirmative Action,' *Social Action*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (July–September 2007), pp 244–259.

[27] *Sachar Report*, p. 237.

Muslims since economic reforms were launched. Approximately 84.5 per cent of Indian Muslim households spend not more than ₹ 20 per day and ₹ 609 per month, and they have been categorized under 'extremely poor, poor, marginal and vulnerable' sections. If one also takes the middle income group as per the parameters set up by the above report, then 13.3 per cent of Indian Muslim households spend only ₹ 1098 per month or ₹ 37 as daily per capita consumption expenditure (DPCE), which is also low, given the high persistence of inflation in the economy. This means 97.8 per cent of Indian Muslim households cannot spend more than ₹ 1098 per month or ₹ 37 as DPCE. Only 2.2 per cent of Indian Muslims, regarded as high-income category by the report, spends ₹ 2,776 per month or ₹ 93 per day.[28] Now given this above-mentioned statistics which claims that a meagre 2.2 per cent (2.5 per cent by detailed consumer expenditure survey) of Indian Muslims belong to high-income category, it is difficult to argue that Indian Muslims are an affluent community. Clearly, an overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims are poor. Obviously, there are few exceptions like Muslim film stars and sport personalities or business tycoons like Azim Premji, who belong to the upper-class elite Indian Muslims. But this minute Muslim elite is not a representative sample of the entire Muslim community in India.

The Muslim political elite are almost negligible as Muslims do not provide the economic and political leadership in the national mainstream with gross under-representation of Muslims in various legislatures of the states and at the Centre.[29] If there are few Muslim political leaders at the state and Central legislatures in India, it also affects the socio-economic development of the community as the grievances of Indian Muslims are not effectively addressed. The Sachar Report conclusively proves that a bulk of Indian Muslims suffer from grave deprivation in social, economic and educational opportunities, lacking access to education, health care, employment and other public services. The level of deprivation had gone to such an extent that in certain sectors, Muslims lag behind Dalits. Several studies prior to the Sachar Report too have concluded that Muslims are more deprived than any other socio-religious group.[30] Before these studies on Muslim

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28 Sengupta, Kannan, Raveendran, 'India's Common People', pp 51–52.

29 Iqbal A. Ansari, *Political Representation of Muslims in India*: 1952–2004 (New Delhi: Manak, 2006).

30 C. Rammanohar Reddy, 'Deprivation Affects Muslims More', 07 August, 2003, www.countercurrents.org; Imran Ali & Yoginder Sikand, 'Survey Of Socio-Economic Conditions Of Muslims In India', 09 February, 2006, www.countercurrents.org; Zoya Hasan and Ritu Menon, *Unequal Citizens: A Study of Muslim Women in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004); Abusaleh Shariff, *India: Human Development Report, A Profile of Indian States in the 1990s* (New Delhi: NCAER & Oxford University Press, 1999); Abusaleh Shariff and Mehtabul Azam, *Economic Empowerment of Muslims in India* (New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 2004).

deprivation, there were very few studies that presented a critique of the current debates on minority rights. Generally, the political and academic discourses on minority rights '[have] not adequately addressed the problem of the social and economic deprivation suffered by large sections of Muslims and, in so doing, confined the debate to such issues as preserving the secular and plural character of India, discussing the cultural rights of Muslims, preventing anti-minority violence and holding the state accountable for violent attacks on Muslims'.[31] Thus, both the Indian state and civil society have failed to address the 'socio-economic rights of Muslims', and 'prioritize cultural rights over the social and economic needs of the community'.[32]

The plight of Indian Muslims in neoliberal India according to the Sachar Committee's findings shatters the myth of 'Muslim appeasement', generally propagated by the rightwing and communal organizations like Sangh Parivar and their political outfits like the BJP. A survey of available data and literature on Indian Muslims amply state that Muslims are not only poor but also doubly marginalized in terms of socio-economic backwardness and political marginalization.[33] The above-mentioned studies and government reports also show that the Indian Muslims figure less within 'regular salaried white or blue collar personnel' under the tag of 'organized proletariat'. Rather, Muslim minorities in India are more concentrated within the unorganized labour force in the informal sector. As unorganized and informal sector labour force, they are also denied several rights that the 'organized labour' are entitled to. In this context, the majority of the Muslim population due to its limited base in the country's middle classes (public and private sector officials, professionals, etc.), and among the organized working population then becomes the 'other' in the country's working class itself. Therefore, if the organized working class constitutes the periphery or margin of the society, the major sections of Indian Muslims definitely constitute a periphery within a periphery.

In this respect, the majority of Indian Muslims are lower and lower-middle classes. The socio-economic situation of Indian Muslims disables them from getting certain rights and benefits due to their unorganized status as casual workers or as small and landless peasants in some parts of rural India or as a

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31 Yamini Aiyar and Meeto Malik, 'Minority Rights, Secularism and Civil Society,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 39, No. 43 (23–29 October 2004), p. 4707.

32 Ibid.

33 Maidul Islam, 'Mapping Socio-Economic Status of Indian Muslims: A Factual Analysis', Working Paper Series I, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2009) published by *Programme for the Study of Discrimination and Exclusion*, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

self-employed group in both urban and rural sectors, whereas their educational backwardness hinders them from upward social mobility by preventing access to certain infrastructural benefits. This form of dual hindrances is again reinforced by the communal problem, which further aggravates the (under)development of Indian Muslims. Therefore, Indian Muslims today are an excluded community. They are excluded from mainstream general education and employment due to lack of affirmative action and the absence of an effective governmental policy for them.

Even if the socio-economic backwardness of Indian Muslims is an empirical reality, the Muslim question in India has been traditionally caught up in and around the debates on secularism and communalism. Researchers have pointed out that 'an important factor contributing to the nature of the current debate on minority rights is the fact that the Indian state has fallen short of recognizing and actively addressing the issue of the socio-economic rights of Muslims'.[34] Largely, the Muslim question in India has been trapped in issues of *identity* and *security* with less attention being paid to the aspect of *equity* by the dominant governmental discourse of policy-making. The importance of socio-economic demands in addressing the Muslim question in India has also been missing within academic circles. While all the aspects of *identity*, *security* and *equity* of Muslims are interlinked, the historical experience of the post-colonial Indian state has been that of addressing the Muslim question within the ambit of a binary opposition of a secular/communal divide. Both the Marxists and Subaltern Studies collective, representing a significant section of progressive academia in India, somehow overlooked the class aspect of the Muslim question. Instead they (re)constructed theories on secularism and communalism largely connected to the agenda of a secular project of the Indian state in tackling the issues related to the rights of Indian Muslims.

The issues of *identity* and *security* of Muslims that have so far characterized the secular-communal debates and the autonomy of distinct religio-cultural rights for Muslims (e.g. Muslim Personal Law, minority institutions, etc.) associated with the spirit of Indian secularism are the major political discourses on the Muslim question in post-colonial India. One rarely finds the issues of socio-economic deprivation and political marginality of Indian Muslims affecting the contours of political debates in India. In fact, Islamist discourses around censorship debates of banning the texts of controversial writers, or protests against religious blasphemy and homosexuality or sticking to the demand for applying

[34] Meeto (Kamaljit Bhasin-Malik), *In the Making: Identity Formation in South Asia* (New Delhi: Three Essays Collective, 2007), p. 108.

Shariah law in denying alimony to divorced women like the Shah Bano case[35] have traditionally been more audible within public discourses of Indian Muslims than those demanding the basic livelihood questions of education and employment from the state.

The Sachar Report's comment: '[d]espite economic boom Muslims have to bear the brunt of the so called "competitive" forces unleashed by liberalization'[36] and 'displacement from traditional occupations has contributed to Muslims being deprived of their means of livelihood'[37], acknowledges the increasing socio-economic marginalization of the community under neoliberal globalization. The political system in India has often tried to address the issues of marginality, exclusion, deprivation and backwardness of weaker sections like Dalits, Tribals, OBCs and women through the mechanisms of varied forms of affirmative action or positive discrimination with a core focus on reservation in education and jobs. In the case of Muslims too, affirmative action is often repeated within policy debates in neoliberal India. The evidence of a policy of affirmative action towards Muslims is visible in the recommendations and policy suggestions of the Sachar Committee Report and the plea for 10 per cent Muslim reservation in education and jobs in the Ranganath Misra Commission Report (2007). In India, one must note that the policy of affirmative action including reservation is just a *relief* and not a *transformative change* in the affairs of excluded and marginalized groups like Dalits, Tribals, OBCs, Women and Muslims. Therefore, critics of neoliberalism might argue that even if affirmative actions continue, the simultaneous persistence of neoliberal regime in India might just hinder the socio-economic development of the 'people' primarily comprising all marginalized and excluded groups with increasing poverty, inequality, unemployment, deprivation, etc. as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

In India, more often than not, various excluded groups become content with sops like affirmative action, while the *status quo* of ruling power bloc becomes secured without the greater challenge of a popular demand for changing the

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35 Asghar Ali Engineer, ed. *The Shah Bano Controversy* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1987); Zakia Pathak and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, 'Shah Bano', *Signs*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1989), pp 558–582; Zoya Hasan, 'Minority Identity, Muslim Women Bill Campaign and the Political Process', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (7 Jan 1989), pp 44–50; A. Parashar, *Women and Family Law Reform in India* (Delhi: Sage, 1992); Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Democracy and the State: Welfare, Secularism and Development in Contemporary India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999); Rochana Bajpai, 'The Conceptual Vocabularies of Secularism and Minority Rights in India', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 7, No. 2. (2002), pp 179–198.

36 *Sachar Report*, p. 21.

37 Ibid.

system. In such a situation, the hegemonic politics of neoliberalism along with the interests of its ruling power bloc become dominant and the counter-hegemonic politics of the 'people' become weaker in offering a simultaneous politics of resistance and social transformation. But how can a politics of the *people* challenge neoliberalism if the 'people' are not able to identify the neoliberal regime as an antagonistic frontier? Also, how can neoliberalism be challenged if the 'people' are fragmented into several particularist demands and if the 'people' are not conceptualized as a wider equivalential construction, accommodating varied particularist demands into a collective political actor? In this respect, I am interested to explore the *politics of particularism* in the shape of Islamism and its challenge/critique/opposition to the neoliberal *status quo*. I would also like to expose the *limits* of Islamist populism under a neoliberal policy regime in India. But before explicitly doing this, I will briefly analyze the major politico-ideological articulations among Indian Muslims within which the politico-ideological discourses of Islamism, often expressed as a 'politics of Muslim particularism', can be located.

Politico-ideological articulations among Indian Muslims

It was discussed in the 'Introduction' that till the 1970s, a significant part of the Muslim world was governed by progressive and secular forces. In contrast, a progressive secularist discourse was historically, never a *dominant* political discourse among Indian Muslims.[38] There were, however, few exceptions, like a small section of Leftwing Muslims associated with the formative stages of the Communist Party of India and Leftwing cultural fronts like the Progressive Writer's movement during the pre-independence period.[39] Then there was a sense of 'Islamic egalitarianism, nationalism and socialism' among a section of North-Indian Muslims.[40] A few Muslim moderates like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mohammad Mujeeb, M. A. Ansari and Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani supported 'composite nationalism' with its agenda of a multicultural and multi-religious secular India, clearly distinct

[38] For a theoretical assessment on the lack of a progressive political articulation among Indian Muslims in the post-colonial political discourses, see Maidul Islam, 'Posing the Muslim Question in India: A Leftwing Perspective', *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Annual No. 6 (September 2009), pp 66–79.

[39] Khizar Humayun Ansari, *The Emergence of Socialist Thought among North Indian Muslims, 1917–1947* (Lahore: Book Traders, 1990).

[40] Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp 278–286.

from the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan as a separate nation–state based on 'Muslim nationalism'.[41]

However, it should be borne in mind that although Indian Muslims never had a dominant progressive Leftwing political articulation within the community throughout post-independent India's political history, yet they have always favoured secular political formations while maintaining distance from the communal political forces of both majoritarian and minority variety. But the limits of secularism in an Indian context seem to be exposing its weaknesses in ensuring socio-economic and political justice for Muslims. The political reality for Muslims in India is represented by the concurrence of communal riots with Muslims being the greatest victims and, then, the denial of justice to Muslims. The political system fails to punish the riot criminals due to the non-implementation of officially appointed investigation committee reports like the Sri Krishna Commission Report (1998) regarding the Mumbai riots of 1992–93. Ignoring the Liberhan Commision Report (2009) to book top BJP leadership, guilty of Babri mosque demolition is another example of denying justice to Indian Muslims. The problem of communal discrimination is further supplemented by the worsening socio-economic conditions of an overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims under neoliberalism. As a result of such complex political circumstances, where an overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims are situated only as alienated and persecuted victims of the political system, the *presence* of an Islamist political articulation as an assertive political choice can be noticed among a minute section of Muslims in India. Recently, we have witnessed protests from sections of Indian Muslims against Bush's visit to India in 2006, and in the

[41] Javeed Alam, 'The Composite Culture and its Historiography', in Asim Roy, ed. *Islam in History and Politics: Perspectives from South Asia* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Barbara Metcalf, 'Reinventing Islamic Politics in Interwar India: The Clergy Commitment to "Composite Nationalism"', in Mushirul Hasan and Asim Roy, eds. *Living Together Separately: Cultural India in History and Politics* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005); Safia Amir, *Muslim Nationhood in India: Perceptions of Seven Eminent Thinkers* (New Delhi: Kanishka Publishers, 2000); Mushir-Ul-Haq, *Muslim Politics in Modern India* (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1970); Mohammad Muzaffar Imam, *Role of Muslims in the National Movement* (Delhi: Mittal Publication, 1987); Barbara Metcalf, 'Observant Muslims, Secular Indians: The Political Vision of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, 1938–57', in Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rochona Majumdar and Andrew Sartori, eds. *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp 96–118.

aftermath of Saddam's execution, in early 2007.[42] The core mobilizations of these protest rallies were from several Muslim organizations featuring Islamist political appeals and Islamic symbolisms. These are only glimpses of an Islamist political articulation among Indian Muslims that is organized around the community identification of Muslim victimhood represented by Saddam's execution by Bush-led 'American imperialism'.

In this context, a significant section of Indian Muslims identifies with the position of what Akeel Bilgrami calls 'moderate Muslims', for whom Islam gives 'a sense of autonomy and identity'. However, these moderate Muslims have 'uncritically and indiscriminately embraced' Islam 'out of demoralization and defeat' in the face of Western dominance during colonial history and in recent times. Such uncritical acceptance of Islam, argues Bilgrami, has often dominated the political actions of moderate Muslims that has not taken them anywhere. Moreover, complicity on the part of moderate Muslims in assessing 'the relative merits' of Islam's 'diverse doctrinal commitments', or working 'towards its reform', or to 'oppose the inviolability of the *Sharia*', has created conditions in which 'a depoliticized Islam' with its appeal and relevance that is 'spiritualist and universalist rather than to the polity' could not be constructed. In such a situation, Islam remains 'perpetually exploitable by the fundamentalist political factions', which the moderate Muslims should ideally 'oppose'.[43] Therefore, by following Bilgrami, one can argue that the 'moderate Muslims' by being complicit towards the Islamists, along with uncritically accepting Islam, have created conditions of possibilities for the appeal of Islamism as an *available* political discourse among Indian Muslims.

In a neoliberal policy regime, one can classify three strands of Muslim political leadership, corroborated with three distinct politico-ideological articulations within the community. *The first group is the token representation of Muslim leadership in those mainstream political parties which run political affairs with an agenda of neoliberal consensus*. However, in most cases, this political leadership among Muslims comes from secular political parties other than the communal BJP, though the BJP too has some minority faces including members of parliament and

[42] 'Saddam's hanging etched in memory of Muslims,' *The Hindu*, 13 January 2007, p. 4; 'Shift U. N. headquarters: Jaffer Sharief: Several injured as violence marks protest in Bangalore against Saddam execution,' *The Hindu*, 20 January 2007, p. 12. For a theoretical exposition on the issue of Saddam's execution, see Maidul Islam, 'Saddam's Pre-Determined Execution and Dynamics of Imperialism', *People's Democracy*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (7 January 2007), available at http://pd.cpim.org accessed on 10 October 2011.

[43] All quotes in the paragraph are from Akeel Bilgrami, 'What Is a Muslim? Fundamental Commitment and Cultural Identity', in Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. eds. *Identities* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 215.

even ministers in various BJP led NDA governments at the Centre. The political leadership emerging out of this kind of collaborationist group with neoliberalism is the representative of the power bloc and its political articulation can be called a *power bloc articulation* arguing either in favour of neoliberal *status quo* or at best not fundamentally opposed to neoliberalism with a protest politics. So, the dominant political tendency, both within and outside the Muslim community, is to either support neoliberalism or just remain indifferent to it.

*The second group has an agenda of 'Muslim particularism' with only community-specific demands***.** In this respect, the politics of Islamism is also nothing short of a *politics of particularism* with specific narrow political interests for its constituency. Since, the politics of Islamism and Muslim particularism is enmeshed into theological discourses, one can call it a *theo-political articulation* among Indian Muslims. This theo-political articulation is a broad spectrum of several small Muslim political parties expressing Muslim sectarianism like IUML (Indian Union Muslim League, active in Kerala), AIMIM (All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin, active in Hyderabad) and AIUDF (All India United Democratic Front, active in Assam) or small pressure groups like Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Muslim Personal Law Board, Babri Masjid Action Committee, etc. or religious organizations with political overtones like Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind and the Islamist politics of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH).

This politics of *Muslim particularism* among a small section of Indian Muslims is nonetheless peripheral. Yet it has the potentiality of creating massive impact over the political discourses with its sensationalism, anti-imperialist rhetoric and Islamist appeal to find its niche audience among the Muslim community. Such a politics of *Muslim particularism* is only more visible after each terrorist attack, corresponding with the diabolic rightwing *Hindutva* assertion raising alarm over 'Islamic terrorism', that vilifies and targets the whole Muslim community as anti-national. On the contrary, vast sections of Indian Muslims feel alienated by the overwhelming suspicion towards minorities as potential terrorists. In this case, the political strategy of terrorism which is mostly backed and funded by outside agencies like Islamist extremists based in neighbouring countries, has no concrete demands unlike the *Muslim particularists* which raise community-specific demands related to various issues of socio-religious and political importance for Indian Muslims through democratic means. The terrorists often have abstract justifications and represent a politics of revenge with no clear objective to uplift the socio-economic conditions or better the livelihood prospects of Indian Muslims.

One can call the politics of Islamism/Muslim particularism as 'anti-hegemonic' and not 'counter-hegemonic' to neoliberal consensus since I argue that anti-hegemonic politics only articulates a politics of resistance/opposition/

challenge to an existing order of *status quo* while counter-hegemonic politics represents a 'politics of alternative/transformation'. At present, the politics of particularism is a marginal political discourse among Indian Muslims. This politics of particularism can be best described as a politics of exclusion which wants to include itself in the power bloc by attacking it from outside without having an agenda of social revolution in the Marxist sense of the term. This kind of politics celebrates its own marginality and generally tries to negotiate with the power bloc. This politics of Muslim particularism often celebrates the conditions of the *excluded* nature of its Muslim constituents while sitting on the *margins* and then attacking the power bloc from outside but without having a radical agenda of social transformation. This politico-ideological position may be called the *politics of altered status quo* (representing a mirror image of neoliberal *status quo*) that vacillates between collaboration and opposition to the dominant power bloc.

In the present and the following chapter, I discuss how the available political vocabulary provided by Islamism against neoliberalism, imperialism and communalism has been adopted by a section of Muslims as a tool of protest amidst a political void due to an absent progressive leadership among the Muslim community. I will address the issue of Islamism as a variant of *politics of Muslim particularism* by taking up the case study of JIH in the next chapter. This Islamist political articulation relies on a scriptural-dogmatic understanding of Islamic religion and cultural practices. In certain contexts, Islamism also becomes an anti-establishment protest ideology, as pointed out in the previous chapter, in a world of 'imperialist globalization'. In this chapter, I demonstrate the particular anti-establishment rhetoric of Jamaati Islamism in India.

Finally, there can be a possibility of constructing *progressive political articulations* among Indian Muslims that is currently missing in the dominant political discourses of the country. Various issues of Muslim minorities have not been audible enough within the political discourses of the Indian Left. That is to say, a Leftwing political agenda which also incorporates the democratic demands of socio-economic deprivation and political representation of the Muslim community apart from its core commitments of anti-imperialism, anti-communalism and socialist ideals, is currently *unavailable* in India in a Laclauian sense. Both the Leftwing political articulation among Indian Muslims and *serious engagement* with Muslim issues within the Left have been so far missing in the post-colonial political discourses in India. In other words, the 'Left' within the 'Muslim community' and the 'Muslim question' within the 'Left' are *absent political discourses*.

Similarly, one can also notice the absence of a strong rightwing political discourse among Indian Muslims which is evident from the weak organizational strength of communal and Islamist groups like Muslim League, Jamaat-e-Islami

etc. That is to say, both the leftwing and the rightwing political discourses among Muslims in India are either absent or, at best, have scanty presence.

A visible progressive political discourse could have been constructed by the initiatives of secular-democratic, liberal and progressive sections among Indian Muslims, and those of Leftwing politics of India in trying to address various problems of Muslim minorities. Furthermore, the dual and combined effort of both the progressive Muslims and the Indian Left could have constructed a counter-hegemonic Universalist political project to rally all excluded groups like Dalits, Tribals, women and Muslims besides the core support base of the Left – workers and peasants – all being victims of neoliberal policy regime in India. Today, one can notice a crisis of leftwing progressive political articulation among Muslims in India, along with the general crisis of the Indian Left. The liberal-secular Muslims have been silent in terms of articulation and intervention in politics in general. One can hardly hear them in the public discourse talking about a progressive politics that would organize Muslims around class lines or at least that would try to address the socio-economic concerns of the community.

This is not to say that Indian Muslims have been largely mobilized by Islamist ideology. As pointed out earlier, an overwhelming majority of Muslims in India neither support majoritarian nor minority communalism and Islamism. But, the *conditions of possibilities* for Islamist political articulations as a dominant political discourse can become a reality if the democratic demands of Indian Muslims are not fulfilled by the political system. In this context, Islamism has had an appeal for a section of Indian Muslims with its rhetoric of 'justice' and 'equality' and its critique of the present policy regime of neoliberal capitalism. In the following subsection of this chapter, I examine this Islamist rhetoric against neoliberal capitalism and how Islamism in India tries to construct an antagonistic frontier against neoliberalism.

Against (neoliberal) capitalist globalization, imperialism and the Indian state: The rhetoric of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH)

In the recent past, JIH has been staunchly opposed to the neoliberal economic policies of the government and argues against economic liberalization, which it equates with 'anti-people measures'. In this regard, its rhetoric is targeted very much against both neoliberalism and the state as an agency to carry forward such a policy framework. This is amply clear from the declaration of Jamaat's latest policy and programme:

> 'The Jamaat would point out the ill effects of globalization and oppose its offshoots, i.e. government's anti-people measures like FDI, SEZ, abolition of

subsidies and the privatization of health care, education and other services. It would emphasize that it is the responsibility of the government to provide the citizens with basic necessities of life. It would oppose anti labour legislation. Interest based loans and wrong policies of government have compelled the farmers to commit suicides'.[44]

It must be noted that now the Jamaat is not arguing only for its 'Muslim constituency' but is expressing concerns for both labour and peasants, which the prevalent academic literature on JIH has ignored. In a Resolution at its All India Members Meet on 28 October 2002, JIH expressed concern over the 'worsening economic condition of the country as consequences of the government's recent unsatisfactory economic policy'.[45] The Jamaat identifies the economic policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization concretely expressed in terms of 'foreign direct investment' (FDI), 'special economic zones' (SEZ), 'abolition of subsidies', 'disinvestment' of public sector and 'privatization' of health and education as 'anti-people'. It also protests against what it calls 'anti-labour legislation'. It also criticizes the policy of 'free economy' to foreign multinationals which it describes as 'neo-colonialism'. The Jamaat clearly argues that such policies have a negative impact on the economy resulting in 'farmer suicides' and closure of indigenous small-scale industries. It further argues that the present government policy is compromising the 'national interest' with the import of 'foreign', 'luxury' and 'unnecessary goods'. In this context, the Jamaat criticizes the government policy of privatization of public sectors with the 'disinvestments policy'. Finally, blaming 'the Government's indifference to the values of equity and justice' the Jamaat prescribes that the government should address the values of 'equality' and 'justice', which the 'economic principles of Islam' try to articulate by promoting 'equilibrium' and 'moderation'.[46]

The Jamaat has identified 'imperialism' in general and 'American imperialism' in particular as the main cause of the miseries of the world and that of the Indian people. In fact, the Jamaat classifies four different strategies by which imperialism dominates, exploits and maintains its hegemony in the world. Such strategies of imperialism according to Jamaat are (a) economic globalization within the structure of capitalist system (b) direct and indirect military interventions (c) unjust use of international economic and political forums and (d) cultural invasion through materialism and consumerism. The peculiar nature of such anti-imperialist and anti-American overtones can be noticed in the latest policy and programme of

44 *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 18.

45 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=127&blockid=31 accessed on 9 November 2009.

46 Ibid.

Jamaat-e-Islami in India.[47]

Traditionally, Jamaat has been characterized with an absence of a critique to the capitalist system in general and the imperialist plunder of developing economies and the pervasive economic impact of imperialism in particular. In the past, neither has it made any significant criticism of big capital and private property nor has it accepted the socialist model as an alternative to the maladies of the prevalent socio-economic system. What Maududi's Jamaat proposed was a 'middle path' that neither followed capitalism nor socialism.[48] Moreover, Jamaat was only critical of the direct imperialist interventions in the Muslim world and, thus, maintained its silence when similar imperialist aggression took place in any non-Muslim country. The political ideology of (Jamaati) Islamism, constructed by Jamaat's founder, Maududi, was more based on cultural orientation and did not directly address socio-economic issues. Furthermore, Maududi's rhetoric of God's sovereignty in an ideal Islamic state was argued more from an administrative point of view rather than a deeper philosophical and political engagement with the concept of 'god's sovereignty' over its subjects, the living beings. Faisal Devji rightly points out that '[t]he founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami was dedicated to displacing sovereignty altogether by handing it over to God and turning politics into a merely administrative matter'.[49] Thus, instead of critiquing British colonialism as a political economy project that led to disastrous economic impact in India, Maududi was more interested in highlighting the 'moral' and 'ethical evils' like women's liberation, secularism and nationalism that according to him were products of European colonialism. According to him, the alienation of Muslims from Islamic religio-cultural practices has resulted in economic and political marginalization of Indian Muslims.[50]

However, the latest policy resolution of Jamaat signifies a significant shift from Maududi where it makes a substantial critique of the 'capitalist system' and addresses the present economic issues besides their regular emphasis on cultural issues like 'nudity' and 'consumerism'. Moreover, in the contemporary unipolar world dominated by the imperialist hegemony of United States, the most aggressive Western power, Islamism can be characterized as an ideology of anti-Americanism as evident from the policy resolutions of Jamaat. However, the 'anti-globalization', 'anti-imperialist' and 'anti-American' position of Jamaat with its emphasis on critiquing the West

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47 *JIH Policy and Programme*, pp 4–8. See Appendix 1.

48 Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and Its Islamic Solution*; Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 489.

49 Faisal Devji, *The Terrorist in Search of Humanity: Militant Islam and Global Politics* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2008), p. 133.

50 Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, p. 49.

is not a radical break from but is consistent with an anti-Western polemic that Jamaat has maintained right from its early days of the 1940s and 1950s.

The present critique of globalization in the Islamist discourse of JIH is actually a continuation of its original anti-Western position while commenting on secularism, capitalism, socialism, nationalism and consumerist materialism. Thus, one cannot simply put the Islamist discourse as a particular kind of an 'anti-imperialist' politics but rather an 'anti-Western' politics that seeks to challenge the hegemonic models of Western modernity, with 'globalized modernity', in the current context, being only one of them. This particular form of anti-Western politico-ideological manifestation of Jamaat simply negates Western modernity as *jahiliya* (ignorance) and argues in favour of an alternative Islamic modernity that would emancipate humanity as a whole.[51] This tension between a liberal version of Islam, often informed and indebted to Western modernity with an Islamist assertion for Puritanism, is an important feature of the making of recent Muslim history. As Faisal Devji has put it succinctly, '[i]f an eminent liberal like Sayyid Ahmad Khan had made a pastoral ideal of the disordered mystical landscape, seeing it as a kind of playground for Islam turned into a purely religious identity, fundamentalist eminences like the Pakistani Maududi and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb made it a landscape of exile from an urban order, now identified with ideological corruption, or of the new *jahiliya* (a period of ignorance historically identified with pre-Islamic Arabia), as they called it'.[52] Thus, important continuity and discontinuity of Jamaat can be noticed from, say, its ideological articulations in the middle decades of the twentieth century (when it was primarily responding to the nation–state)[53] and its contemporary opposition to global capitalism under a neoliberal policy regime in India.

The rhetoric against 'neoliberalism' and 'imperialism' can be seen in the 'observations' and 'resolutions' of a one-day seminar organized by Jamaat and titled as 'India's Foreign Policy: Past, Present and Future' on 10 March 2007 at New Delhi, with participants from several Muslim organizations, including JIH, Jamiat-I-Ulema-i-Hind, Alhle-e-Hadees, Shia organizations and Ibnae Qadeem Deoband represented by Maulana Muzammilull Haq. According to a JIH press statement, the seminar discussed how, in matters of India's economic policy in the

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[51] Maududi, *Islam and Ignorance*. The argument about imagining multiple modernities in the world with Western and Islamic versions with its incommensurable views can be found in Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror*.

[52] Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 2005), pp 44–45.

[53] Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India*; Agwani, *Islamic Fundamentalism in India*; Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', pp 503–506

'first four decades of independence', the 'principles of self-reliance' helped India to acquire 'a degree of manoeuvrability in foreign policy based on the principle of non-alignment'. In this respect, JIH's understanding of the contemporary international situation is that of a unipolar world dominated by US supremacy and 'Islamophobia' and how India has shifted from its previously held non-aligned foreign policy to bandwagon with the US.[54]

It is important to recognize here that JIH tries to make a link between domestic economic policy and foreign policy as it believes that foreign policy is 'a reflection and outcome of the policies pursued by the government at home and, thus, has a direct impact on the daily lives of citizens (which) must be rooted in the democratic aspirations of citizens'. According to Jamaat, foreign policy 'must be rooted in building a society that is based on economic, social and political equality and is free from all forms of discrimination where people are free to chart their own destinies without internal or external force or coercion. Such a policy must seek to defend and advance the right to independence and self-determination of nations and towards this end promote a multi-polar world order'.[55] It critiques the Indian foreign policy for being 'out of sync with these aspirations' and rather propagates 'successfully evolv(ing) strategies for struggles for a people's foreign policy'. In this respect, the Jamaat calls 'for an honest debate within the political parties and civil society as it is apparent that the foreign policy cannot be determined by the Indian elite who are willing to collaborate with the American Imperial project'. It also appeals 'to the people of India to awaken to the dangers inherent in this paradigm shift and launch a struggle to safeguard the sovereignty and independence of the Indian nation'.[56] Under these circumstances, JIH proposes that 'India's policy in South Asia should be to strengthen SAARC and build (its) neighbourhood as a bastion of peace and prosperity (which) will prove to be of immense mutual benefit for all the South Asian people'. The seminar also hailed '(t)he historic victory against Israeli aggression in Lebanon by the Hezbollah-led Lebanese National resistance, the strengthening of the National resistance in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan and the worldwide opposition and protests against war and occupation' which according to JIH 'is forcing the US imperialism into a defensive position' while supporting 'the National Liberation movements and Struggles of People against aggression by the US–Israel and their allies and by other expansionist powers'.[57]

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54 See Appendix 2.

55 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=51&pageid=59 accessed on 22 February 2010.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

With regard to major oppositions to the current nature of Indian foreign policy, the JIH demands that the Indian government should enunciate a 'sovereign independent foreign policy' which should be 'part of the anti-colonial legacy of freedom struggle' since '(t)he present tilt with the US Imperialism will prove detrimental to the cause of the Indian nation'.[58] However, the Jamaat identifies India as 'an emerging Economic power'. In this respect, it argues that 'India should resolve to go ahead with the Indo–Pak–Iran Oil and Gas pipeline in spite of opposition from the US' since this would essentially resolve the 'energy needs' of a 'growing economy' like India. The Jamaat also asks for a foreign policy which would strive for '(b)uilding equality of nations and respect for human dignity within countries that eliminates all forms of racism, xenophobia, religious and social prejudices and demonization of all people'. It also demands that '(a)ll states [should] sign and ratify the Rome Treaty of the International Criminal Court, especially the US and Israel, for a genuine and just settlement of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, [and] securing the early, complete and permanent withdrawal of the US and NATO forces from Iraq and Afghanistan'. The Jamaat also forthrightly opposes 'the US war designs on Iran' and demands that 'the Indian government should not abide by the US-led sanctions on Iran'. It specifically describes Israel as 'an Occupying Colonizing power in defiance of the laws and the will of the International community' and therefore demands that the Indian government should end 'all Defence–Military ties with Israel as it is an Apartheid–Zionist State, which discriminates on the basis of Race and Religion'. It further advices the Indian government to '[w]ork towards Alternative Economic Policies based on people's economies for prosperity and increased cooperation and socialization, and rejecting those that are anti-people and neo-liberal-led market policies, which enrich a few corporations and countries'.[59]

JIH had recently organized an 'Anti Capitalist Imperialism Campaign'. On this occasion, in its pamphlet, it has been critical to the new economic policies after 1991, which 'neglect the rural economy', 'reduce public spending on social welfare sectors', 'privatize the public sector', 'create unemployment' and serve the interests of wealthy elites instead of the poor.[60] According to the same pamphlet of Jamaat, such an economic policy of liberalization, privatization and globalization has a negative impact on the country with 'growing inequality', rural distress and 'farmer suicides'.[61] Similarly, in the same pamphlet, JIH views that the policies of 'economic liberalization' also contributed to the crisis of public health and

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 See Appendix 3.

61 See Appendix 4.

education in India.[62] JIH also argues that under such an economic policy regime, 'displacement' of ordinary citizens is a grave reality in India. It specifically targets the special economic zones as the prime reason for displacement and exploitation of poor, tribals, rural folk and workers in contemporary India. It also asserts that such economic policies have also resulted in 'environmental crises'.[63]

JIH held the current economic policies in contemporary India responsible for 'Western cultural aggression' under the auspices of 'imperialism', which affected Indian 'lifestyles' and 'morality' along with the 'exploitation' of 'female bodies for commercial gains' which have also increased 'atrocities on women'.[64]

Finally, the Jamaat suggests that India's 'surrender to capitalist empire' has resulted in a shift in foreign policy which is described by the Jamaat pamphlet in the following words: 'Our surrender to the Capitalist Empire has forced us to withdraw from our traditional policy of non alignment and the consequent leadership role. We are forced to support the tyrannies and atrocities of big powers which are against our dignity and sovereignty and against the moral standing rooted in our great historical traditions'.[65]

In the light of all these understandings on varied issues of contemporary India, the Jamaat proposes an 'Islamic alternative' to ensure 'justice', 'moderation', 'freedom', 'growth', 'equitable distribution' and well-being of Indian people in general. It also suggests that Islamic teachings resolve 'poverty', 'inequality', 'starvation', 'misery' and 'environmental crises'.[66] But what is the nature of this 'Islamic Alternative'? The Jamaat argues that 'Capitalism puts economic growth and capital in front and a human being is given a back-seat, while in Islam, Human and Humanity is the top priority. Growth and Capital are for the service to Humanity. So the Human concern should always take the top position and all concerns including the concerns of Growth and Development should be secondary'.[67] The Islamic alternative that JIH proposes is close to the scheme of welfare state where the state has a major role to play in the collective well-being of its citizens, taking care of basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, education and health.[68]

JIH also justifies an interest-free Islamic society by arguing that interest 'helps in concentration of wealth and stops the flow of wealth from rich to poor'.

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62 See Appendix 5.

63 See Appendix 6.

64 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=111&pageid=555 accessed on 22 February 2010.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

According to Jamaat, 'Islam prohibits illicit speculation since it engages the capital in unproductive activities and discourages the employment-generating productive activities'.[69] Whether such a society based on what Islamists call 'Islamic economics' will be viable or not is a matter of debate. However, the vision of such an 'Islamic alternative' is discussed here briefly to understand what kind of alternative economic arrangements are being envisioned by Jamaati Islamism. JIH also claims that the prophetic teachings of Islam will resolve the 'problems of consumerism and environmental crisis'.[70]

JIH urges the 'people of India to ponder over the teachings of Islam' as it thinks that Islam 'is the name of the will and desire of [the] Creator and Sustainer' besides being part of India's 'national heritage'. The Jamaat also wishes that 'the noble teachings of Islam are considered while formulating the policies of the country; so that the fruits of progress reach to everyone' while 'poverty, starvation, miseries and ignorance are vanished' and the 'country becomes the focal point of equity and justice along with growth and development'. In this respect, the Jamaat hopes that by following the teachings of Islam, the country grows 'into a perfect model of welfare and well-being for the whole world to follow'.[71]

Assertive rhetorical critique against 'capitalistic-imperialist looting and plunder', 'Indian ruling class' and 'wealthy and elites' can be noticed in a pamphlet of the Solidarity Youth Movement (SYM), the youth wing of JIH in the Indian state of Kerala. According to this pamphlet, both Desi (local/national) and foreign 'exploitative sections are flagrantly violating fundamental human rights', whereas '(t)he living conditions of the overwhelming majority of people are extremely pathetic'. It claims that the 'entire society has turned out to become the victim of an oppressive state controlled by vested interests of wealthy and elite'. In this regard, the SYM believes that 'the resources usurped by the powerful and monopolistic rightfully belong to the victims, the people alone'. The pamphlet further asserts that '(i)t is meaningless to call a society free if its basic and just needs like fresh air, fresh water, food, clothes, shelter, medication, education, etc. are not fulfilled'. But what is freedom according to SYM and what is its politico-ideological vision of a 'free society'? For SYM, the notion of 'freedom' is inherently related to *freedom from* 'imperial exploitation' and 'capitalism'.[72]

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69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves, are they beautiful and captivating? What about youths without a revolutionary zeal?' collected from JIH National Headquarters in Delhi on 2 December 2008. See Appendix 7.

SYM believes that India 'has not yet realized freedom in its genuine sense' despite the fact that 'the colonial rule of British had been disbanded'. Thus, post-independent India has failed to fulfil 'aspirations and hopes' of the common man. It further points out that the government has proved to be an 'utter failure' to protect 'the fundamental rights and interests of common man upheld by the Constitution'. It argues that '(e)ven after kicking out the British, we could never see the Indian government adopting socio-economic policies grounded in the realities of our land. We are still running after failed ideologies and perspectives engendering exploitation. (T)he Indian ruling class is deviating from its stated objectives day-by-day. Solidarity views with grave concern the contemporary scenario of global, monopolistic corporations taking over the reigns of governments. In this regard, Solidarity (is) trying to play a pioneering role as a social force capable of moving the government to act according to the interests of the people'.[73]

It is interesting to note that as described in its pamphlet, SYM does not see a fundamental change between the everyday lived experiences of the common people from 'British colonial India' and those in independent/post-colonial India. In this sense, it believes that there is no fundamental difference between the conditions of colonialism and post-colonialism, where the latter is continuing the same policies of the former with 'neo-colonial' interventions of 'multinational corporations' and 'imperialism' in India. SYM claims that its political strategy 'synthesizes struggle against injustice with constructive efforts to uplift the downtrodden and to provide the poor with basic amenities of life'. Moreover, it believes in the 'philosophy' of 'struggle' when 'acquiescence to cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism has become the norm in social life'. It further claims that while undertaking a number of political campaigns and initiatives, it has been able 'to enlighten people about the predicament of contemporary life, (which), no doubt, raised important questions regarding governance, morality and development, thus inaugurating a new era of enlightened civic consciousness'. Solidarity claims that many of its activities have 'infuriated the ruling-elitist classes' but none can ignore the questions raised by it. It also claims that the issues and events of 'international, national and local relevance' engaged by it 'will have important bearings upon the future of Kerala'.[74] M. Sajid, former secretary of SYM in Kerala is an ideologue associated with JIH. He was temporarily stationed in Jamaat's national headquarters in Delhi for organising an 'anti-imperialist campaign' when I first met him. In my field interview, he was critical about 'neoliberalism' in India and 'capitalist model of

73 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves'.

74 Ibid.

development', which, according to him are fundamentally political in nature, class-centric, 'displaces' people and is 'anti-poor'.[75]

In the context of 2009 parliamentary elections in India, JIH came out with its own 'people's manifesto'. Although it did not contest the election, it came out with such a manifesto to put forward its views and demands before the political mainstream of India. In this manifesto, it says that '(t)he Jamaat believes in a political system that is based on ethical values. It envisages a system of governance wherein every citizen enjoys equal opportunities and justice which is free and easily accessible. Jamaat believes that peace and justice are interdependent. So for a peaceful society, we need to have our systems strongly founded in the values of justice. The measures enlisted in this manifesto formulate a small step towards the realization of Jamaat's vision of a value-based welfare state. In the coming elections, JIH will support those alliances or fronts, parties and candidates which commit to implement these demands'.[76]

In the same manifesto, under the plank of 'Development', JIH argues in favour of 'just distribution of resources among all sections of society'. Moreover, it also argued for amending the Land Acquisition Act and mandatory 'compensation' for land losers, modification of SEZ Act including the labour laws and introduction of cheap and interest-free housing for poor and middle classes.[77] On 'Economy', the Jamaat manifesto argues for 0 per cent interest for farmers and poor entrepreneurs, minimal dependence on IMF–World Bank and interest-free banking.[78] On the issue of 'health', the Jamaat manifesto argues for enacting Right to Healthcare Act, increasing budgetary allocation for health, and enacting a Health Regulation Act to check 'malpractices' by 'corporate hospitals'. It also argues against 'privatization' of healthcare in India.[79] On 'Education', the Jamaat manifesto argues for more government spending in education, free education and compulsory education for all in mother tongue, regulation of fee structure in self-financing institutions, benefits for minority institutions and infrastructural development for Urdu medium schools. It also argues against Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in education.[80] In the field of 'Agriculture', the JIH manifesto argues for promoting the agrarian sector, interest-free loans to needy farmers, ban on Future Trading and Forwarding in agriculture, and for increasing the budgetary allocation in agriculture. It

75 Interview with M. Sajid in Delhi, 2 December 2008. See Appendix 8.

76 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=459 accessed on 5 October 2009.

77 Ibid, See Appendix 9.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

also argues for revoking the Indo–US knowledge initiative on agriculture and regulating 'contract farming by corporate groups'.[81] On 'Industries', the Jamaat manifesto demands for subsidizing cottage industries, checks for pollution control and bailout packages for certain 'sinking' industries. Besides such demands, the Jamaat is strongly opposed to privatization of the public sector and FDI in retail. [82]

It is evident from the above rhetoric of JIH, so far discussed in this chapter, that it believes that the neoliberal regime is currently enjoying hegemony in the governmental affairs of the country. It also suggests that the neoliberal regime after 1991 had a negative impact on the Indian people and, thus, recognizes the chain of antagonistic frontiers as enemies of the *people* in 'neoliberal capitalism', 'American imperialism', 'corporate multinationals', 'Indian state' and 'Indian ruling classes'. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the rhetoric of JIH uses the victimhood of the 'people' in general under a neoliberal policy regime and is not simply arguing in terms of 'Muslim victimhood'. Thus, it harps on the fact that it is articulating a kind of protest politics not simply on the part of Indian Muslims but also on behalf of working class, peasantry, tribals, women, etc. In other words, it tries to articulate a politics of universalism against the chain of antagonistic frontiers in the name of 'people' than merely arguing for a narrow sectarian politics, which I have previously termed as 'Muslim particularism'. Its particular identification of the chain of antagonistic frontiers as enemy of the 'people' is the condition of possibility for larger political mobilization. As Laclau points out, '(t)he presence of a frontier separating the oppressive regime from the rest of society is the very condition of the universalization of the demands via equivalences (in Marx's words: a social sector has to become a general 'crime' for the aims of society as a whole to emerge)'.[83] In this respect, JIH clearly identifies neoliberalism, imperialism, the Indian state and the ruling classes as responsible for the 'misery' of the 'people'.

Islamist assertion in India with the rhetoric of 'deprivation', 'dispossession' and 'dislocation' of Muslims is not new. Before the emergence of Jamaat-e-Islami in 1941, Gooptu discovered the traces of 'resurgent Islam' with its rhetoric of 'religious assertion' and 'religious identity' as the metaphor of 'Muslim decline' and 'victimhood' among the Muslim urban poor and Muslim artisans right from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s.[84] In the post-colonial context, what actually changed from that Islamist rhetoric and 'anti-colonialism' of the Khilafat

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Laclau, 'Constructing Universality', p. 302.

84 Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early Twentieth-Century India*, pp 244–277.

movement[85] and the identification of local indigenous ruling classes as the target of Muslim politics, is the change of antagonistic frontiers from 'colonialism' to 'neoliberal capitalism', 'American imperialism' and the 'Indian State' as evident from the rhetoric of Jamaat. In this respect, Jamaati Islamism articulates a new set of political demands that has never been heard before in the history of Islamist movements in India. Therefore, today, the ontological question of Islamism is not simply related to re-articulation of religion in political terms but how it exists by creating a chain of new antagonistic frontiers in an era of neoliberal hegemony.

Laclau and Mouffe argue that the 'resistances to the transnational corporations' and 'tyranny of market forces' need to first 'establish a frontier and define an adversary', which JIH has clearly done by identifying a chain of antagonistic frontiers as mentioned above. But Laclau and Mouffe also suggest that 'this is not enough. One also needs to know what one is fighting for, what kind of society one wants to establish', which we have not yet seen clearly in the rhetoric of JIH even if it briefly points to the idea of an 'Islamic alternative' based on 'equity' and 'justice'. We have learnt from Laclau and Mouffe that 'without a vision about what could be a different way of organizing social relations', anti-establishment political movements 'will remain of a defensive nature'.[86] But in India, Islamism is a protest ideology without a replacing vision of an 'Islamic State' like in Bangladeshi Islamism (as I will examine later in this book). In this respect, I regard Islamism in India as an *anti-hegemonic politics*, where the *politics of resistance* and *negotiations* with the power bloc for some alternative policies are present, but a *politics of social transformation* in the form of their cherished vision of an Islamic state is absent. Whereas in Bangladesh, it is counter-hegemonic to Kemalists/secularists like the old national-populism of Awami League and the Bangladeshi Left with an agenda of Islamic social transformation. But is 'anti-hegemonic politics' of Islamism in India necessarily 'defensive' in character? In this respect, I will focus on Jamaati Islamism with its further identification of antagonistic frontiers, its search for an alternative political formation and its peculiar politico-ideological contradictions between Islamic universalism, Islamist populism and Muslim particularism in neoliberal India in the next chapter.

85 Ibid, p. 278

86 All quotations are from Laclau and Mouffe, 'Preface to the Second Edition' of *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. xix.

3

Ideological Articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind

Antagonistic frontiers and rhetoric of 'Islamic alternative'

In the previous chapter, I have demonstrated how Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) identifies 'neoliberal capitalism', 'American imperialism', 'Indian State' and the 'ruling classes' as a chain of antagonistic frontiers. In this chapter I will show how the Indian Jamaat further constructs its antagonistic frontiers against 'non-Islamic ideologies'. The identification of antagonistic frontiers is very clear from its programmatic agenda on varied national and international issues, press statements and local political activities that JIH has been able to lodge. In this respect, JIH also claims to provide an 'Islamic alternative' to 'non-Islamic ideologies'.

While criticizing the non-Islamic political and economic systems, the latest policy and programme of JIH argues that '(i)n the context of the national situation, Jamaat seeks to present "Islam as the only alternative" before the country and its masses'.[1] The JIH programme further states that '(t)he objective of JIH is the establishment of the *Deen* (the divinely ordained way of life known as Islam), which reforms individuals, both their inward and outward selves, and solves all problems of the human society in the best manner' and argues that this *Deen* 'also provides to all sections of society the best means for equity and justice, welfare and reform, and progress and prosperity, irrespective of race or colour, and region or language'.[2] The Jamaat is, therefore, of the 'firm conviction that Islam alone offers

1 *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 8.

2 Ibid, p. 3.

the best and most suitable solution to the problems' that the country is faced with, 'including the crises of thought and action' that the fellow citizens 'are passing in their moral, social, economic and political spheres of life'. According to the JIH programme, '(t)he Jamaat is striving for the establishment of Islam in the country. For the attainment of its objective, the Jamaat stands firmly committed to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the light of their guidance, the Jamaat employs ethical, constructive, peaceful, democratic and constitutional means, and refrains from all such activities which are opposed to truth and honesty or are likely to provoke communal hatred, class conflict or social disorder'.[3]

As a cadre-based ideological organization, JIH sets its targets for every four years of its policy and programme and, hence, Jamaat planned to achieve the following targets in the four-year term from 2007 to 2011 on 'national issues': (a) The Islamic view regarding the current wrong policies and false ideologies would be presented to the extent that Islamic view may become a topic of debate in academic circles and in mass media, as an alternative to the existing policies, ideologies and value systems. (b) Opinion in the policy-making bodies and in the general masses would be mobilized in favour of Islamic banking to pave the way for the establishment of Islamic banks. (c) Islamic economic system would be introduced to the extent that it emerges as a viable alternative to the existing capitalist imperialist system.[4]

A Student's Islamic Organization (SIO – JIH's student wing) leader and JIH activist in a field interview told me about his analysis of global financial crisis and the potentiality of Islam to offer an alternative and the priorities of an 'Islamic system'. He argues that 'Global financial crisis is the result of interest and finance-based capitalist system', whereas the Jamaat believes 'in Islamic order as an alternative to capitalism'. According to him, '(t)o overcome this present crisis, state intervention is necessary but capitalist system is a faulty system because it creates widespread inequalities'. For him, 'Marxism–Leninism became an alternative to capitalism for some time' despite the fact that 'it had no history when compared to the long and rich history of Islam'. He further asserts, '(n)ow, if Marxism can become an alternative, why not Islam can become an alternative since Islam has a history of an alternative to prevalent modes of socio-economic and political structures'. His further criticism to contemporary capitalism is related to the intrinsic 'inflation', which according to him 'is due to hoarding and black markets, while Islam forbids hoarding of commodities for long and black marketing'. He

3 Ibid, p. 3.

4 Ibid, p. 24.

argues that 'Islam encourages investment and enterprises on the basis of profit and loss and not on interest-run economy' and, thus, 'Islam is for real economy, real investment and devoid of virtual economy which we find in capitalism'. He claims that 'Islam is for resolving the basic livelihood issues of food, clothes and shelter, which are the priorities of Islamic system and Islamic economics than the virtual economy of stock markets and financial markets'.[5]

Recently a resolution of the central advisory council (CAC), the top policy-making body of JIH has expressed concern over economic inflation in India by blaming not only the 'faulty economic policies' of the government but also by asking the government not to 'succumb' to the pressures of 'imperialist capitalism', multinationals, the World Bank and IMF.[6] From the above rhetoric, it is clear that JIH seeks and promises to give an 'Islamic alternative' to the contemporary socio-economic and political systems in India. However, it also strives to resist the pitfalls of what it calls 'imperialism' and 'capitalism'.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and politics of resistance

It is clear from our discussion so far that JIH identifies 'imperialism' and 'capitalism' as antagonistic frontiers. The JIH programme argues that '(s)afeguarding human rights, promoting democratic values, opposing political and economic colonization and containing the upsurge of fascist tendencies shall form part of the priorities of the Jamaat'.[7] But does JIH simply makes rhetorical statements to fight 'imperialism' and 'capitalism' or has it really tried to launch an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist resistance, wherever it was possible? JIH took part in the Anti-Bush protests in New Delhi on 1 March 2006 and on 2 March 2006 in Mumbai during the three-day visit of the US President George Bush.[8] In this respect, Dr S. Q. R. Illiyas, a senior Jamaat leader, thinks that the Indian government 'has become vulnerable for America and Israel'. He remarks, '(u)nfortunately the rulers of this country either have become puppets of America or they are collaborating or agents because the way they are moving is not in the interest of the country, but it is 100 per cent in the interest of America, Israel and the corporate groups in India. The strategic relations with America and Israel show the policy shift of Indian state'.[9] In this respect, the Jamaat leader argues

5 Interview with Shahnawaz Ali Raihan in Delhi on 3 December 2008.

6 See Appendix 10.

7 *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 9.

8 'Muslims stage massive protest in Mumbai,' *The Hindu*, Friday, 3 March 2006, p. 12.

9 Interview with Dr S. Q. R. Illiyas in Delhi on 3 December 2008.

that 'apart from the Left, we, i.e., the Muslim community, have raised the issue of foreign policy shift towards America and Israel, the way diplomatic relations were established in 1992 with Israel and later on turned to a strategic relations with Israel. So, we, the Muslims, are protesting on this foreign policy shift'. This Muslim protest according to him was evident during the visit of American President George Bush in India in 2006:

> 'When Bush came to India the biggest protest rally was organized by Muslims. One was in Delhi's Ramlila grounds organized by Jamiat Ulema-I Hind and Jamaat with more than two lakhs people and another big rally was in Bombay's Azad Maidan with five lakhs people mobilized by various Muslim organizations including us. So America knows that the potential threat to American interests as far as India is concerned is the Muslims'.[10]

Similarly, the Jamaat, along with some small Muslim and Left groups, organized a protest meeting against the visit of the US President, Barack Obama to India in 2010, since according to Jamaat, the Obama administration has not fundamentally changed its foreign policy in West Asia, Iraq and Afghanistan.[11] It is interesting to note that in the above field interview, the JIH leader tries to project that his organization represents the Indian Muslims as he utters 'we, i.e. the Muslim community', and further used 'we are protesting, the Muslims are protesting' as if any mobilization of JIH on the issue of 'anti-imperialism' is reflective of the sentiments and protest aspirations of the entire Muslim community in India. In the later part of this chapter, I will show how JIH in fact fails to become the representative voice of Indian Muslims even if it tries to rhetorically claim that it represents the Muslim community.

In August 2008, JIH organized a convention on 'Dangerous Indo-US Strategic Alliance under the garb of the nuclear deal'. The JIH press statement issued from New Delhi, dated 26 August 2008 clarifies that this convention was participated by 14 more organizations including many Left parties like CPI(M), CPI, RSP, Forward Bloc and secular parties like JD(S), BSP and some Muslim organizations and NGOs 'which are working together against Indo–US Strategic Alliance with the name "Campaign against Imperialism", lambasting the UPA government for Indo-US nuclear deal and becoming the US partner'. The convention also criticized the Central government for

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10 Ibid.

11 Cithara Paul, 'Left, Muslim Obama rift', The Telegraph, Wednesday, 3 November 2010; Also see following web links: http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&blockid=&pageid=726 accessed on 10 November 2011; http://www.cgpi.org/category/keywords/jamaat-e-islami-hind-0 accessed on 10 November 2011.

being 'part of the ruling elite's bid to become a strategic partner of American imperialism' and unanimously adopted a resolution which condemned 'attempts' by the government and corporate houses for trying to get the 'dubious status of some kind of a nuclear weapons state, which did not mean anything for the masses'. In this convention, JIH General Secretary, Nusrat Ali, slammed the US 'for its military aggression in various parts of the world' and 'lashed out at both the Congress and the BJP for working towards a permanent alliance with America'. He said 'it would be in the best interest of the country that a suitable ideological alternative against Capitalism or Imperialism is presented to the people' and added that in his opinion, 'if any one has best alternate ideology to run the earthly system should discuss it openly; otherwise, Islamic system is the most applicable alternative for the people'.[12]

The JIH Programme states that 'familiar strategies would be adopted to implement the policy' which includes revival of 'Study and Research Centre' and preparation of 'Literature on the following themes: (a) Capitalism—analysis and Islamic alternative; (b) Globalization—an Islamic view; (c) Islamic movement through various stages; (d) Characteristics of Islamic culture; (e) Progress, international trade and new technology in the light of Islam and (f) Islamic stance on environment and a nationwide campaign would be launched against the capitalist imperialism'.[13]

The JIH people's manifesto before 2009 Lok Sabha elections urged the Indian government to condemn 'imperialist design' of the US apart from giving a call to 'revive' non-aligned foreign policy. It also asked for strengthening good relations among SAARC countries. Moreover, it asked for the abolition of Indo-US and Indo-Israel strategic alliance and called the Indian government to recognize Hamas led Palestinian government. Finally, it demanded the withdrawal of NATO forces from Iraq and Afghanistan.[14]

Similarly, the Solidarity Youth Movement (SYM) VCDs and brochures with a number of photographs suggest that it organized several agitations, protest demonstrations, rallies and seminars on several issues, ranging from picketing in front of a Gram Panchayat (local village council) office, which indulged in corruption in distributing the Adivasi welfare funds to agitations against petrol–diesel price hike, Karipur airport march against unwarranted fare hike of Indian Airlines and Air India, Human chain and oath-taking against WTO and protesting the Indian vote in IAEA against Iran. SYM also engages with local momentary protests like 'protesting the high-handedness and

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12 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=351 accessed on 9 November 2009.

13 *JIH Policy and Programme*. 2007–2011, p. 26.

14 See Appendix 11.

exploitation of passenger by the airport officials at Calicut airport'. Similarly, SYM also conducts seminars and symposiums on topical issues. One such open reassessment was conducted at Trichur, in which important intellectuals discussed 'Development, Imperialism and the Left'.[15]

The SYM pamphlet emphasizes that 'anti-imperialist resistance' is a part and parcel of prophetic traditions.[16] In a field interview, M. Sajid, the former secretary of SYM, elaborates about the legacy of prophetic traditions. He argues that if one closely follows the lives of the Prophets, then 'socio-political issues are very important for the Prophets of Islam like Abraham, Moses and Jesus'.[17] Also, he argues that Prophet Muhammad 'himself was for the voice of the poor'. Similarly, he argues that the duty of Muslims is to participate in concrete 'anti-imperialist struggles'. He points out that the prophets were actually addressing 'the major issue of their time'. In line with this prophetic tradition, SYM identifies 'imperialism in its all dimensions' as 'major issue of the day' by analyzing the human history 'with tools of Quran'. SYM thinks that 'imperialism is a major threat to humanity' and, thus, it 'started to bring the issue of *development* into the political discourse of Kerala' while campaigning among the people that '*development* is not delinked from the discourse of capitalistic–imperialism'.[18]

According to Sajid, the Coca Cola plant of Plachimada in Kerala's Palakkad district was such 'an imperialist project, which wanted to produce millions of litres of Coca Cola per day' with the help of 'very big wells' that extracted 'millions of litres of groundwater daily'. Once the plant started, the local Adivasis started experiencing water shortage. Then, the plant also needed to dump the carbonated water components that produced hazardous chemical wastes. According to Sajid, 'the Coca Cola authorities lied to the ordinary Adivasis that these wastes are useful fertilizers, which were not even donated for free but sold to Adivasis for an amount'. The poor Adivasis believed that 'the Americans must be giving good fertilizers' but 'everything in the agricultural field was devastated when those harmful chemical wastes were used'. In this context, Sajid argues, the 'majority of tribal population became alien in their own place'. Sajid further asserts: 'what we felt that the Coca Cola is a universal emblem, a typical model or a symbol

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15 Excerpts from SYM brochure collected on 2 December 2008. The description of some SYM agitations and initiatives marked with catchy slogans can be seen in Appendix 12.

16 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves' collected on 2 December 2008. See Appendix 13.

17 According to Islamic belief, all previous prophets mentioned in Torah and Bible came to deliver the message of Islam.

18 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008.

of American imperialism. In Plachimada, we felt that it is not merely a symbol but directly acting in our land against the marginalized tribal people. Thus, it is our Quranic or Islamic duty to come forward for these people'. In this context, SYM initiated a 'resistance movement' against the Coca Cola plant, which at the beginning 'was a low profile struggle by the local people on this issue'. Later on, with the statewide campaign of SYM, 'it became a great struggle'. Sajid says, 'we informed the people about what is actually happening in Plachimada among our poverty stricken Adivasi Brethren. We urged the people that "you have two duties". One is to agitate and protest along with them but we also need to help them to give them something, otherwise they will die. So, we collected food items throughout the state and marched towards Plachimada with hundreds of vehicles carrying rice, vegetables, etc. going towards the Coca Cola plant'. SYM brochure describes this movement in a rhetorical style: 'Solidarity activists lead the popular struggle against the black magic or brewing poison cola from the life blood of people'. The issue of 'Coca Cola resistance' and solidarity with the affected Adivasi people was more important for SYM than 'the issue of pesticides in Coca Cola drink' which was 'taken up by Centre for Science and Environment activists like Sunita Narain'. As Sajid points out:

> 'For us, the pesticide issue is secondary, because most people know that Cola is harmful and not a healthy drink. For us, the issue of Tribals is more important since the Cola plant is directly hitting the poor Adivasis, who are not the prime consumers of Coke'.[19]

The tactics of resistance that was adopted by SYM was interestingly the Gandhian form of campaigning among the people to *boycott* Cola as a soft drink. The movement of boycotting Cola in villages tasted momentary success as the Cola was temporarily banned by the Kerala government. Later, the anti-Pepsi-Cola agitation with nearly 30 political parties and organizations of different shades under the banner of the Anti-Pepsi Cola Agitation Committee, took out a march to the Pepsi unit at Wise Park, Kanjikode, demanding its closure for what they called 'water piracy'.[20] Thus, Sajid claims that apart from the Coca Cola boycott movement, SYM was also agitating against water privatization along with noted environmentalist Vandana Shiva.[21] The Coca Cola agitation by SYM was reported in the print media in India, which claims that its 'anti-imperialist and anti-globalization war' has the support of other organizations like the Swatantra Matsyathozhilali Federation (Independent

19 Ibid.

20 'Organisations seek closure of Pepsi unit'. *The Hindu* (Delhi). Wednesday, 4 May 2005.

21 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008. See Appendix 14.

Fishworkers Federation).[22] After the Communist Party of India (Marxist) led Left Democratic Front government of Kerala formally banned Coca Cola in the state, a procession was taken out by the Anti-Cola Agitation Committee and SYM at Plachimada in Palakkad by hailing the state government.[23]

Apart from the Coca Cola agitation, Sajid told me how SYM has successfully resisted an Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded express highway in Kerala and implementation of Coastal Management Zone Act, both of which he calls an 'imperialist project under the garb of *development*'. The Express Highway planned by the Congress led UDF government in Kerala before 2006 might have caused large-scale displacement since it proposed to have a flyover of 100-m width, 10-m height running through the entire state from north to south Kerala with several hundred kilometres, dividing the state into two halves. In official terms, it was called 'Access-Controlled High-Speed Corridor Project'. With this bridge, Kerala would have been divided into left and right halves for access control. So, free movement of people from one part of the sate to the other would have been restricted. There would have been some in-between roads only in very few entry points, but the express highway zone was covered with 'heavy toll tax'. SYM first started an agitation against the project and claimed that, later on, many political parties came to join them because of their agitation, and, eventually, 'the project was abandoned'. SYM launched an agitation against the project on three planks: (a) possibility of large-scale displacement throughout the state; (b) the project is unviable to the development requirements of Kerala's common people and (c) environmental questions like destruction of several small hillocks.[24] The Express Highway agitation was reported in the print media. Both the pro-Left Kerala Sahitya Parishad and pro-Jamaat SYM were opposed to such a project on grounds of 'anti-environment' and 'lopsided development'.[25]

As pointed out earlier that the project was stalled and, in this sense, it was a successful resistance movement from the agitators like SYM. Sajid describes the success of this resistance and the role it played in popularizing the SYM in Kerala in following words:

> 'This project was funded by Asian Development Bank and ironically the portfolio was under the Muslim League minister. Solidarity took the issue

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22 John Mary, 'Kerala village says "no" to cola', *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), Monday, 19 September 2005.

23 'Jubilation in Plachimada', *The Hindu* (Thiruvananthapuram), Thursday, 10 August 2006.

24 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008. For detailed interview see Appendix 15.

25 John Mary, 'Road Warriors: A freeway to hell or heaven, Malayalees can't decide', *Outlook*, 6 September 2004.

of Express highway as the first major issue in Kerala and by the grace of God, from that issue we became a vibrant mass movement. People felt that even if the government supports an ADB funded project, a popular struggle can resist it'.

In the recent past, SYM took a major issue of coastal people, which Sajid describes as 'closely related to imperialism and neoliberal policies'. Sajid argues that 'there is a Coastal Regulation Zone Act (CRZ Act) according to which one cannot make any big development in the beach area, which started from Indira Gandhi's time. But the UPA government appointed a Committee under the noted agricultural scientist, M. S. Swaminathan. His committee was appointed to re-look into the CRZ Act. Rather than reviewing it, he completely re-modified the CRZ Act. His committee proposed a new legislation called the Coastal Management Zone Act (CMZ Act), in which every big development project in the beach is allowed. If it is implemented, then, the fishermen living in the coastal areas would be displaced and devastated. So, we studied this issue in great detail and organized two massive rallies, one from north and another from south, through the coastal belt of Kerala. We had conducted several meetings on this issue and tried to educate the people by raising awareness about the harmful impact of CMZ Act. As a result, throughout the Kerala coast, there were huge agitations'.[26]

However, this was not only a Kerala-specific issue but a central legislation. Sajid claims that because of SYM's agitation, 'the Left front government also took a strong position against the implementation of CMZ Act'. According to Sajid, SYM approached the Congress leaders and told them directly with an assertive tone. Very interestingly, the Congress in Kerala later took a stand against the central legislation. Sajid claims that the success of stalling the CMZ Act was only limited to the state of Kerala since it is a central legislation.[27]

An exhibition organized by Solidarity in Tirur town actually threw light on all of these issues which a journalist has claimed as 'the burning problems that the people of the State witnessed in the recent past'.[28] All the above issues taken up by Solidarity became popular. According to Sajid, '(b)ecause of all these issues, which SYM took seriously in Kerala, it could make a good penetration among the Adivasi people and fisher folk'. Besides the agitations against Coca Cola, Express highway, Indo-US nuclear deal and CMZ Act, SYM has also taken 'a very serious

26 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 Decmber 2008.

27 Ibid.

28 J. S. Bablu, 'Spotlight on critical issues', *The Hindu* (Thiruvananthapuram), Sunday, 16 January 2005.

issue of corporatization of retail sector, particularly against intrusion of Reliance and Walmart into India's retail sector'. Throughout Kerala, 'SYM has led this movement both ideologically and practically and a number of organizations joined the movement for which social activist, Vandana Shiva came'. In fact, 'she made a National Forum for which SYM is a part of representing Kerala'.[29]

The introductory pamphlet of SYM argues that despite unwarranted accusations of 'anti-developmentalism' from mainstream media and some political parties, it strongly advocates 'a genuine development paradigm which gives due consideration to earth and man' while vehemently opposing 'colonial development visions' and successfully 'interrogating the imperial forces and their native brokers'. The SYM pamphlet also suggests that its resistance and solidarity with the victims of capitalist developmental projects 'has helped regain the culture of dissent which was fast fading in the contemporary milieu of Kerala'.[30]

Under the guidance of JIH, SYM was also instrumental in earning a better compensation deal for the affected people in a couple of cases. Recently, SYM took up an Endosulfan rehabilitation programme. In Kerala's northernmost district of Kasaragod, there is a huge cashew plantation. From the 1980s onwards, endosulfan, a deadly chemical pesticide was being sprayed in India even when it was banned in all developed countries. It is a highly carcenogenic chemical. According to Sajid, from Kasaragod, SYM got several reports about the victims of endosulfan spray. Many people got cancer, many died and many newborns were affected with congenital deformities like big heads, mental retardation, etc. Almost 5–12 villages were affected by this spray. Sajid says, '(s)o, we felt that it was an onslaught of capitalistic developmental model because here the motive is profit at any cost'. This harmful chemical was sprayed from the helicopters to the cashew plantation fields. Through wind and water, this harmful chemical was carried to a number of villages besides the cashew plantation fields. It was the government's own cashew plantation and the government itself used such a mechanism of spraying Endosulfan from the helicopters. SYM tried to bring this issue in the forefront of the public and the government. According to Sajid, '(t)he last Congress government did nothing. The Left government in 2006 came and said that those who have died would get ₹ 50,000 as compensation and they did it. It was actually the personal interest of our Kerala Chief Minister (CM), who is now regarded as a Green CM. So, it was a good gesture from the government, but for those who are still surviving with severe diseases, both the government and the Panchayat (local rural body) did nothing'.

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[29] Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008. Also see M. Sajid, 'Protest Against Corporatisation of Retail Sector Gains Momentum in Kerala', *Radiance Viewsweekly*, Sunday, 16 September 2007.

[30] Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves' collected on 2 December 2008.

In this regard, SYM approached the people by making a documentary of what is actually happening in the Endosulfan-affected area and printed leaflets for awareness campaign. At the same time, SYM also collected money by bucket collections by going to houses, shops, schools, churches, mosques and temples. In this way, by Sajid's own admission, SYM was able to collect nearly ₹ 50 lakhs. With this money, SYM charted out 'a correct rehabilitation programme at the grass-root level of five villages that SYM selected after doing an extensive survey. In this current rehabilitation programme, provisions of medical assistance, building of homes, educational loans and rationing of food are there for the affected people of Endosulfan'. So, in this way, Sajid points out, 'our services are struggles and in many cases our struggles are services too'.[31] Recently, the Jamaat has completed the first phase of Endosulfan rehabilitation programme.[32]

In the same field interview, Sajid says, 'since Solidarity's motto is struggle and service, I can give you an example of our service cum struggle and struggle complementing and leading to our service in a colony called three-fourths cent colony in Kollam district'. Eighteen years ago, some 91 families were displaced from the sides of a national highway for road widening project. The government promised them for rehabilitation with enough housing space. But even after 18 years, Sajid says, 'they were not even offered one cent of land and instead only three-fourths cent of land was given to each family, to live in small huts. For the last 18 years, they were trusting the Congress and CPI(M) parties in vain as nothing progressed on this issue. Two years ago, they approached our people. We have a very small organization there. We said that "we can try". Then we studied the whole issue. We approached the district collector and the local MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly). The MLA told us that, "why are you intervening? This is not your issue". So, we told him that "It is our issue. If it is people's issue, then it is our issue". Then the MLA challenged us that "if you can do something then you show what you can do, I am not going to help you since many years, I and my party workers are doing something for them and now at the last moment, you are coming here and trying to take the whole credit. So, I won't do anything". Only two of our representatives had gone to meet the MLA. We told him that "we will give you only one month's time. Within this one month, if you don't do anything, we are going to sit in front of your home with the whole colony people". So, within one month, everything was alright and those displaced families got three and a half cents of land each, some five times more than what they were originally given by the government. We handed over the whole file about this movement to Jamaat-e-Islami. Jamaat

31 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008.

32 'Solidarity Completes First Phase of Rehabilitation for Endosulfan Victims', *Radiance Viewsweekly*, 6 June 2010.

is building homes for these people. So, it was our positive initiative in the form of struggle but turned into service for the displaced people'.[33]

On 10 January 2009, solidarity took out a mass rally in the streets of Kozhikode city on the day of its district conference. I witnessed the rally marked by anti-fascism, anti-American and anti-Israel slogans. The entire rally was under police surveillance for security reasons. The police informed me that there were around 10,000 participants in the rally according to their official estimates. I was also informed by a Solidarity leader that George Galloway of RESPECT Party (UK), who was going to speak at the Solidarity open public meeting, cancelled his trip at the last moment because of his wife's illness. The kind of slogans written in placards and posters of the Solidarity rally say the following: 'Law should be to maintain peace not to terrorise people', 'Gaza needs our voice now, Free Gaza, Free Palestine', 'Youth for Struggle', 'Human rights are not charity, it is the birth right of every individual', 'Support people of Gaza, Break ties with Israel', 'Chavez, Nejad, Castro—Carry On, We are with you', 'Solidarity Speaks for the Abandons', 'Stop war against innocent people, Down with Israel's terrorism', 'Solidarity motto: Today pain, Tomorrow gain', etc. Apart from the posters and placards in the rally, there were mocking symbols and street shows representing police atrocities against Muslims, Bush–Manmohan nuclear deal and strategic alliance, severe conditions of rubber plantation workers in Kerala, dying situation of fishermen, consumerist Western culture of the youth today as opposed to the threat that it posed for old native Kerala culture. A young solidarity member–activist Irshad studying in Class XII said, 'we don't want Western culture, we have our own Islamic culture'. After the rally reached the Kozhikode sea beach for the open public meeting, on the dais a group of solidarity activists were continuously chanting the following slogans: 'Develop Justice', 'State Conference Zindabad' and 'Condemn Israel Attack in Gaza', 'No food, no water, no shelter, no fuel and no medicines in Palestine, starvation from each blood of individuals, but Palestine would rise'.[34] Then there were slogans supporting the people who are against globalization.

So far, it is evident from the above narration that JIH with its youth wing SYM in Kerala has been successful in resisting certain developmental projects which it calls the 'capitalistic and imperialistic model of development' in cases of Plachimada Coca Cola plant, Express Highway and CMZ Act. In other cases like the Endosulfan rehabilitation programme and three-fourths cent colony, it has only been able to earn a better compensation deal for the affected people. In both these cases, it has also contributed to the compensation of the affected people. However,

33 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008.

34 Translated to me from Malayalam to English by an SYM activist.

JIH has not been successful to stall the Indo–US nuclear deal or policy level change either in the case of what it calls 'neoliberal economic policies' or 'Anti-NAM, pro-American and pro-Israeli foreign policy'. At best, it has mobilized people in various protest rallies against 'imperialism' and 'neoliberalism'. In fact, the Indian Left with similar demands also failed to change the fundamental policy shifts of the Indian government on economic and international matters even with its presence in the Parliament unlike the Jamaat, which is not even a parliamentary political party and merely acts as a pressure group. Here, we can see three different results of Islamist politics of resistance in neoliberal India: (a) Successful local resistance to a 'capitalistic developmental project' resulting into the abandonment of such a project. (b) 'Capitalistic developmental project' is successfully implemented but resistant politics can only earn some better compensation package and (c) Failure of resistant politics to change macro-level policies of the government. In certain cases, JIH achieved result (a) and (b) by making a liaison with some human rights organizations, NGOs and the Left. But to achieve result (c) in positive terms, unlike the present condition of negativity, it gives the call for a broader platform of 'anti-imperialist struggle'. This leads to the question of JIH's anti-imperialist alliances and its nature of relationship with its anti-imperialist allies, which I shall be discussing further in this chapter.

Political alliances of Jamaat

It is clear that the Jamaat has taken issues of displacement and rehabilitation, which are linked to what they call 'capitalistic mode of imperialism'. The issue of 'anti-imperialism' is common with the Indian Left. Similarly, issues of displacement, rehabilitation and environment are also common with several secular NGOs and civil society movements. In fact, the Jamaat has joined hands and shared platforms with the Left on certain issues. Since, there is overlapping and commonality of issues taken by both the Jamaat and the Left, particularly, the issue of 'imperialism', it is important to analyze the relationship between the Left and the JIH.

In recent times, the Jamaat has been close to the Left and various secular and human rights organizations for a broader 'anti-imperialist resistance' and 'anti-capitalist campaign' as pointed out earlier. In such a context and just months before 2009 Lok Sabha elections, Syed Jalaluddin Umari, the current President of JIH opined that both the Congress and the BJP are mostly responsible for various problems of Muslims. He pointed out that 'as far as Muslim issues are concerned, there is little difference between the Congress and the BJP. ... (I)n states where there is a realistic alternative available to both the Congress and the BJP, Muslims should prefer this alternative, and where there is no such credible alternative, they

might consider the Congress. This would not be because of any great enthusiasm for that party's record but simply a matter of compulsion'.[35] In the Kerala Assembly elections of 2006, the Jamaat supported the Communist Party of India (Marxist) led Left Democratic Front (LDF)[36] precisely because of the LDF's 'fight against fascism at the national level, its firm opposition to the imperialist threat posed by the US and its consistent fight against the globalization and liberalization policies of the UPA Government'.[37] T. Arif Ali, the Kerala *amir* (President) of Jamaat-e-Islami openly spoke in the media for its support to the Left, given the latter's 'commitment to secularism and protection of minority rights, its opposition to the exploitative policies of neo-liberalism and its consistent fight against the imperialist designs'.[38] The same voice of support for the Left on grounds of 'anti-communalism' and 'anti-imperialism' has been echoed by M. Sajid.[39]

According to a JIH news feed, JIH even formed a 'national alliance against imperialism' with mainstream parliamentary Left parties and 15 odd Muslim groups. It also invited the UNPA allies and the BSP to join the 'national alliance against imperialism'. The news feed further points out that apart from nuclear deal, 'the Indo–US joint naval exercise is turning out to be yet another rallying point for the Left and the Muslim organizations'. JIH leader S. Q. R. Illiyas said, '(e)veryone who has opposed the nuclear deal will have a space in this National Alliance. We do have serious differences with the Left on several issues, but when it comes to opposing imperialism, the Left has always been in the forefront. And we appreciate that'.[40] This was not different from what Sajid has to say about the issue.[41]

On political alliances, Mujtaba Farooq, the then political secretary of JIH briefly expressed how the current strategy of Jamaat shifted after the 'Gujarat genocide'. He argued that 'previously, JIH was not interested in elections and its members were not asked to vote'. Even the Jamaat did not tell the Muslims, whom they should vote. But in recent years, 'after the dreadful injustices against Muslims on

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35 Syed Jalaluddin Umari interviewed by Yoginder Sikand, available at http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=37&pageid=381 accessed on 5 March 2010. Similar views were also expressed by Umari with my field interview on 4 December 2008.

36 *The Hindu*, Thursday, 13 April 2006, p. 7.

37 *The Hindu*, Thursday, 20 April 2006, p. 6.

38 *The Hindu*, Thursday, 20 April 2006, p. 12.

39 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008. See Appendix 16.

40 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=37&blockid=&pageid=345 accessed on 5 October 2009; Cithara Paul, 'Muslim bodies launch alliance to "thwart' n-deal"', Indian Express (New Delhi), 10 July 2008.

41 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008. See Appendix 17.

all socio-economic and political fronts, the Jamaat decided to intervene in political matters of the country by placing its demands for both Muslim and non-Muslim communities'. Farooq claims that, now, the Jamaat has a 'clear understanding about whom the Muslims should vote'. He argues that the 'Jamaat cannot be now indifferent to India's parliamentary democratic processes like it did in the past'. Its understanding is that Islamic movement cannot be restricted only to Muslims. Thus, it formulated new experimental strategies and platforms like 'Movement for Peace and Justice' (MPJ) in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. This movement for 'peace' and 'justice' takes up both national and international issues like poverty, unemployment, issues of Dalits, Tribals and human rights' violations in other Muslim countries by American forces. According to Farooq, Jamaat's resistance against both (Hindu/majoritarian) communalism and imperialism made them close to the Left because both communalism and imperialism are common enemies of both the Left and the Islamic movement in India. Farooq claims that in one of the Jamaat's recent programmes, a Left leader said 'regarding communalism, Jamaat should rally behind the Left since the Left has a better understanding and experience to handle the issue of communalism, while on the question of imperialism, the Left should learn from the Muslim world and Muslim organizations since they have a better understanding of imperialism as they face imperialism in their everyday life'. Farooq complements: 'we very much share this concern and attitude of the Left to fight communalism and imperialism'. For him, although JIH has 'fundamental ideological differences with the Left', it thinks that 'the Left today has now become softer on the question of atheism'. He further points out that at the regional level, the Jamaat played an important role in forming the United Democratic Front (UDF) in Assam on common issues of exploitation and discrimination against Muslims and backward castes. Today, Jamaat is working as a pressure group, but it is thinking of floating a political party in the near future to take up issues of justice and exploitation for both Muslims and marginalized groups among non-Muslims'.[42]

Thus, Jamaat's political alliance with the Left on certain issues is a tactical one and not based on fundamental ideological affinity as claimed by the Jamaat leadership. In fact, the ideological differences between JIH and any foreign/Western ideologies can be seen in a press release proclamation of Jamaat:

> 'Capitalism, Communism and Fascism are losing their ideological ground. The economic progress claimed to have achieved through capitalism is confined to a small section of the rich people in the country. Communism has been a fiasco, as admitted by its own leaders. They are saying that socialism is a remote dream and there is no shortcut to materialize it. Fascism is trying

42 Interview with Mujtaba Farooq on 30 November 2008.

to impose its ideals by force. That is impossible in a plural society like India. Modi's victory in Gujarat was not an approval of the ideals of the BJP. It so happened due to the lack of an alternative for the BJP'.[43]

Thus, the relationship between the JIH and the Left is a complex one. The Jamaat favours the Left on issues of 'communalism' and 'imperialism', but there are serious ideological differences in terms of the nature of *ideal society* in the political imagination of both these formations. Although, JIH is supportive of the central leadership of the Left and its positions on 'communalism', 'neoliberalism' and 'imperialism', it has not been happy with the Left front regimes in Bengal and Kerala on certain issues. Before the 2009 Indian Parliamentary elections in April–May, T. Arif Ali, the JIH Kerala State President in a field interview told me that 'Congress is a soft-*Hindutva* party, whereas Left parties have a good stand, particularly CPI(M) takes strong position against fascism, communalism and imperialism'. However, according to Ali, in Kerala, 'the Congress led UDF including the Muslim League has been more sympathetic to Muslim issues. But on corruption cases, both the UDF and the current government by CPI(M) led Left Democratic Front (LDF) are the same'. Ali further points out that although there is little possibility of a third front in Kerala in the near future, but 'with a third Front at the centre,' the Jamaat 'has more independence and bargaining power regarding larger issues of resisting imperialism and communalism besides placing the demands for Muslim community'.[44]

A Solidarity activist said, 'look we are more favourable to present CPI(M) led state government, but we can't support them on every issue like that of serving the interests of Harrisons Company. The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), CPI(M)'s labour wing, is in favour of Harrison's Company, which wants to build up a big rubber plantation company and wants to take big chunk of land while giving less compensation to the local Adivasis (Vedi community), who own the land. We are in favour of the local Adivasi community who are demanding compensation worth 5 acres of land and ₹ 50,000'.[45] This was again confirmed by T. K. Hussain, secretary of Jamaat in Kerala, in an interview conducted by me, the next day. [46]

The company referred by the Solidarity activist is none other than Harrisons Malayalam Limited, India's largest rubber producer and is a part of RPG Enterprises, one of the largest business conglomerates in India. Recently, there

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43 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=62&pageid=212 accessed on 9 November 2009.

44 Interview with T. Arif Ali, 13 January 2009.

45 Field interview with a Solidarity Activist on 10 January 2009.

46 Field interview with T. K. Hussain on 11 January 2009.

were reports of clashes between the cadres of CPI(M) mass organization DYFI and Solidarity activists on this issue.[47] Similarly, the Jamaat leadership was not happy with the Left Front government in Bengal on the issue of land acquisition from a significant section of peasantry including the Muslim peasantry when the state government wanted to set up big private industries in Singur and Nandigram, and the deplorable socio-economic situation of Muslims in Bengal recorded by the Sachar Committee Report.[48] But the Jamaat is certainly in favour of supporting the Left at the Centre and in other states, like in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, where both the Left and the Jamaat have some strength. In fact, in the Maharashtra Assembly elections (2009), the Jamaat was open to even support the Left led 'third front', although it is more flexible in individually supporting 'strong secular candidates in all 288 assembly seats, preferably of the alternative secular front or parties'.[49]

How does JIH justify its tactical political alliances with non-Islamic elements like the Left, several human rights organizations and NGOs with whom it has 'fundamental ideological differences'? How does JIH ideologically convince its constituency to support those political forces, which it has traditionally described as *jahiliya* (ignorance of non-Islam) in its organizational literature and constitution? On this question, M. Sajid argued that the concept of *jahiliya* arises only when one sees Islam as an 'ideology' and 'a comprehensive way of life'. He further argued that the present 'manifestation of *jahiliya*' is in the system of 'imperialism'. In this respect, he argues that to fight *jahiliya*, which has a long prophetic tradition in Islamic history, one needs to make practical political alliances with those who are against a given *jahil* system. In this respect, he recapitulated how the Prophet has made alliances with Christians and Jews against the 'powerful idolaters of Mecca'. Finally, he asserts that a 'rigid' and 'puritan' concept of *jahiliya* is not present in Islam. Thus, it is not the case that only Muslims can fight against 'injustice' but others might also join them.[50]

Here, it is interesting to note how the Jamaat ideologue has reinterpreted the concept of *jahiliya* to justify the contemporary political alliances of JIH in the context of what it calls 'anti-imperialist resistance'. I will further discuss this reformulation of the concept of *jahiliya* by JIH in Chapter 6 while making a

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47 '20 hurt in clash in Kozhikode', *The Hindu* (New Delhi), Monday, 14 June 2010; 'Attack: Solidarity flays CPI(M)', *The Hindu* (New Delhi), Tuesday, 15 June 2010; '14 activists of CPI(M), DYFI held', *The Hindu* (New Delhi), Thursday, 17 June 2010.

48 Field interview with JIH Bengal President, Rahmat Ali Khan and ex-President Dr Raisuddin Ahmed on 17 November 2008.

49 See Appendix 18.

50 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008. See Appendix 19.

comparison with the Bangladeshi Jamaat's conceptualization of *jahiliya* and how these two conceptualizations are different in terms of seeking political alliances against a common antagonistic frontier. By now, it is amply clear that JIH has identified both 'communalism' and 'imperialism' as antagonistic frontiers and those issues are fundamental in seeking a tactical political alliance with the Left. But does JIH equally treat both 'communalism' and 'imperialism' as major threats to the Indian people at large and the Indian Muslims in particular? Or has it got preferences in terms of identifying and prioritizing either 'communalism' or 'imperialism' as a greater threat than the other? This is what I will discuss further.

Anti-majoritarianism and priority of antagonistic frontier

From the previous subsections of this chapter, it is clear that JIH identifies the Hindu majoritarian communalism as an antagonistic frontier. The SYM pamphlet in fact, considers *communalism* as a 'common evil and enemy of all people'.[51] In the aftermath of nuclear deal debates, the Jamaat was more interested to have a non-Congress and non-BJP secular alternative at the Centre. In this respect, it is interesting to note that while the Jamaat has been consistent enough in recent times to give a call for a non-Congress and non-BJP third political alternative, in certain cases, they supported the Congress led UPA in the name of electing 'honest and able Muslim leaders' by giving the logic of 'Muslim representation' in Parliament and state legislatures. For example, in 2009 Lok Sabha elections, out of total 20 seats, Jamaat supported the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front in 18 parliamentary seats of Kerala, while it supported the Congress candidate in Wayanad and Muslim League candidate in Ponnani (both the candidates won). In fact, when it actually comes close to voting for 2009 Lok Sabha polls in India, the important factor of resisting 'communal fascism of BJP-led NDA' in Jamaat's terminology became more dominant than resisting 'imperialism and neoliberalism'. In this context, in several states, the Jamaat openly gave a call to support the Congress led UPA to strengthen a credible stable secular government at the centre even where BJP is politically and organizationally weak. For example, in Andhra Pradesh, out of total 42 seats, Jamaat supported 37 Congress candidates, 2 CPI(M) candidates, 2 TDP candidates and 1 TRS candidate. The basis of such a decision of Jamaat 'has been the commitment of the party to the People's Manifesto declared by Jamaat, *ability of the candidates to fight fascist forces in the country* and their personal

[51] SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves' collected on 2 December 2008.

character and adherence to ethical values'[52] (Emphasis mine). Similarly, in 2009 Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal, it gave a call for constituency-specific support. In some seats, it supported the Left Front candidates, while in others it supported the Trinamul and Congress candidates. It is also interesting to note that in Kerala, the Jamaat was more favourable in pursuing the national politico-tactical line of non-Congress and non-BJP alternative. In contrast, in states like Andhra Pradesh and Bengal, the local factors like what it calls 'anti-Muslim and anti-peasantry image' of TDP in Andhra Pradesh and Left in Bengal and voting for a stable secular formation at the Centre was a *priority* over issues of neoliberalism and imperialism.[53]

Despite the fact that the Jamaat was previously keen to support a non-Congress and non-BJP front at the Centre during my fieldwork in late 2008 and early 2009, the unhappy experiences of unstable third front during 1996–98 period in Indian politics giving way to the BJP-led NDA formation of 1998–2004 made several Jamaat supporters to vote for a Congress led UPA government at the Centre in 2009 Lok Sabha elections.[54] In 2009, the inability of the Left-led Third Front to gain credibility among the masses as a stable secular alternative with erstwhile NDA partners like AIDMK, TDP, BJD and JD(S) made the Muslim constituencies of Jamaat to rethink about actually voting for non-Congress and non-BJP third alternative and instead they end up supporting the Congress-led UPA in several states.[55] Thus, lack of a credible 'third front' in challenging the dominance of both the Congress and the BJP at the Centre and in many states, the tactical question of supporting the 'strong secular candidate' always remains open for a 'politics of Muslim particularism' represented by Jamaat where the interests of its core Muslim constituency in terms of greater physical threat from communalism becomes dominant than threat from imperialism and neoliberalism.

It is also true that while in many Lok Sabha constituencies, it supported the Left across several states, the Jamaat could not influence much of the voting behaviour of Muslims in favour of the Left due to the prominence of what some Jamaat activists have called the 'anti-peasantry and anti-Muslim *image*'[56] of the Left, particularly in the dominant media discourses of Bengal. In Kerala too, it

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52 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=65&pageid=475 accessed on 5 October 2009.

53 Telephonic interview with M. Sajid on 20 May 2009 and interview with SIO leader and Jamaat activist Shahnawaz Raihan on 21 May 2009.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

failed to convince the Muslim voters in favour of the Left due to a combination of both local factors like disgruntlement with the Kerala state government, textbook controversy, issues of land acquisition for industry and displacement, corruption charges against Left leadership in Kerala and national factors like credible stable secular government at the Centre.[57]

From the above analysis, it is clear that the Jamaat due to its limited organizational strength in India is unable to control the public opinion among Muslims. Rather, the limited organizational strength of Jamaat is a function of its limited support base among Indian Muslims. Although the Jamaat is an important Muslim organization in India, it does not have any overarching influence over Indian Muslims. The Indian Muslims not only dissociate themselves from the Islamist project of Jamaat which is evident in its limited mass base, but also dissociate themselves from issues like politico-electoral choice of 'whom to vote', as the Muslims rely less on Jamaat. In other words, it fails to become a hegemonic pressure group among Indian Muslims or something like a 'vanguard of Indian Muslims'.

From the above analysis, one can also say that the contradiction of Indian Muslims to choose between pro-neoliberal secular force and anti-neoliberal secular force in keeping out the *Hindutva* forces from power is also reflected within Jamaat's own organization as well. And with certain populist doles like employment guarantee, farm loan waiver and promise to implement Sachar recommendations, perhaps it does not mind to elect a Congress-led secular government which combines the policies of neoliberal agenda with some social responsibilities for the poor, marginalized and weaker sections of the population. So, even if the Jamaat leadership has strong opinions about both the Congress and the BJP as 'agents of neoliberalism', when it actually comes to electing a government, JIH prioritizes the antagonistic frontier of majoritarian communalism than neoliberalism and imperialism. Jamaat's priority in identifying *Hindutva* as the prime antagonistic frontier is reflected in its assertion for anti-majoritarianism. In this respect, the limits of Jamaat in opposing neoliberalism are due to its 'prioritization of *Hindutva*' as a greater 'political enemy' than 'imperialism' and 'neoliberalism' as evident from Jamaat's position and voting pattern in Lok Sabha polls of 2009.

This prioritization of *Hindutva* over neoliberalism by Jamaat is a tactical decision because the core constituency of Jamaat, Indian Muslims, is far more threatened by the existence of *Hindutva* as a political force. Therefore, Jamaat primarily articulating a politics of 'Muslim particularism' is more concerned with the security and identity of Muslims than the questions of equity, which

[57] Telephonic interview with M. Sajid on 20 May 2009.

is broadly connected with the questions of poverty, education, employment and health facilities. These issues are, however, relatively neglected by successive Indian governments as a part of neoliberal logic of fiscal management and cut in expenditures on social sectors as pointed out earlier in Chapter 2. In such a situation, a politics of Muslim particularism, which represent a subaltern group like Indian Muslims, badly affected in the context of neoliberal policy regime with socio-economic deprivation of the community have a tendency to oppose neoliberalism as such. In this respect, Jamaat's opposition to neoliberalism is understandable. But the existence of political *Hindutva*, which has a history of persecuting religious minorities in India, only makes Jamaat to think about prioritizing the antagonistic frontier and, hence, has to choose majoritarianism than neoliberalism as a prime enemy.

However, such prioritization of *Hindutva* majoritarianism than neoliberalism has to do with the changed ideological understanding of Jamaat vis-à-vis its rethinking process of accepting *Indian secularism* as such. In a field interview, a student leader of Jamaat asserted that theoretically, Islam approves 'pluralism' and in a 'multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural India', there should be more 'dialogue and communication' between various communities rather than 'dominance' of any particular political agenda like '*Hindutva* fascism'. Moreover, a number of Jamaat leadership is admitting that since Islam is for the betterment of whole of humankind, Islamic movement and Islamist ideology cannot be just restricted to Muslims. Globally, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has Christian members of Parliament, and Hezbollah in Lebanon closely works with Christian groups. Likewise, in India, the Jamaat has 25,000 non-Muslim associates and sympathizers, its youth wing in Kerala SYM has 500 non-Muslim members, while its student wing SIO has many non-Muslim members and at least 20 Christian and Hindu members in student's union posts in various universities of Kerala.[58]

Furthermore, contrary to SIMI that condemns 'secularism' and 'liberal parliamentary democracy' as Western/foreign ideologies or '*jahiliya*' (ignorance of non-Islam), the Jamaat today thinks that much of Maududi's original formulation regarding 'secularism' and 'nationalism' as equivalent to 'jahiliya' in pre-partition days needs to be revised. According to the same student leader of Jamaat, Maududi was responding to a version of secularism that totally negates the role of religion in public and political life as was the case in Turkey and in many Western countries. Similarly, national chauvinism and deification of nation was replete with various forms of aggressive nationalism as in the case of Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy. Instead, Maududi rightly talked about 'sovereignty of god'. But given the

[58] Interview with ex-SIO President Bishruddin Sharqi on 1 December 2008.

contemporary situation of a globalized world where the concept of nation–state itself has undergone change and when an Indian version of secularism gives equal respect and treatment to all religions while guaranteeing religious freedom, the fiercely antagonistic posture adopted with regard to these concepts by certain radical groups is neither appropriate nor realistic.[59]

The Jamaat argues that Maududi himself revisited and changed some of his positions on secularism, nationalism, etc. and after Partition advised the Indian Jamaat to work peacefully by using legal means in a multi-religious country. The Jamaat also believes that since at the global level, Islamic movements are increasingly realizing to revise the traditional Islamic outlook on issues of secularism, democracy, religious pluralism and politics, JIH is no exception to this trend. They argue that no movement can remain obsessed with its founding father and refuse to change as in the case of Marxism, there are forms of neo-Marxism that have sought to move beyond Marx. Therefore, Jamaat also needs to move beyond Maududi with a practical approach in the current context.[60]

A Jamaat leader gave an example of this shift from Maududi. He said that while Maududi forbade voting for political parties or participating in elections held under a secular Constitution, the Indian Jamaat changed its position on this issue a decade ago. It first allowed its members to vote and then to support certain parties to counter the BJP. And now, in this age of neo-liberal economics, which according to the Jamaat is playing havoc with the lives of poor citizens, the Jamaat is taking an active role in working with non-Muslim human rights' groups and popular political movements. All these are major shifts from the earlier approach of the Jamaat from the time of Maududi.[61]

Anti-terrorism and the security question

I have already demonstrated in this chapter how majoritarian communalism has been a major concern for Jamaat. Precisely, because of its grave concern for majoritarianism, JIH is also sensitive about the security of Muslims as riot victims and victims of communal stereotype of witch-hunting in terrorism-related cases. These two concerns are amply expressed in the political demands of JIH in its people's manifesto.[62]

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59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Interview with Mujtaba Farooq, 30 November 2008.

62 See Appendix 20.

On terrorism, JIH is more open to criticize and condemn it even in their policy programme, public rallies, press statements, etc. A press statement about a convention of JIH suggests that it 'condemned terrorism, but came down heavily on 'victimization' of innocents in the name of curbing terror, especially those belonging to Muslim community, and 'dividing' the people on the basis of religion'.[63] In a public meeting, T. Arif Ali, President of JIH Kerala State Circle, said that 'extremist groups operating in various parts of the world should not be associated with the Islamic movements. It is colonialism that stands behind them'.[64] A very senior leader of Jamaat, who joined JIH in 1944, points out that '(t)here has been no change in the fundamental principle of Islamic ideology in JIH since its inception in 1948, although there were certain elements within Jamaat in the past, which were more interested in extremism'. He clarifies that this extremist section 'differed with the majority opinion of Jamaat for a moderate and cautious approach for Islamisation in India and, thus, defected from the organization'. He points out that 'the message of Islam is peace and justice and is, thus, contradictory to terror'. He claims that 'Jamaat's role in containing terror has been significant as it has been most vehemently expressing its views among the Muslim and non-Muslim communities that Islam does not approve terrorism and killing of innocent lives'. He argues that '(t)errorism has no religion, in fact, religion condemns terrorism. The whole humankind is Allah's creation and Adam and Eve's children. In that sense, terrorists should stop violence against anybody whether Muslims or non-Muslims and should engage themselves in welfare and relief programmes like Jamaat. Ikamat-e-Deen (establishment of Islam) with *Hikmat* (caution) and *dawa* (religious preaching/missionary practice) is the solution to the problems of Indian Muslims'.[65] But at the same time, he says, 'we must acknowledge that denial of human rights and socio-political and economic justice leads to terror'.[66]

However, JIH leader Illiyas, while condemning terrorism also pointed at 'state terrorism' and how the grand international coalition of non-Islamic religious extremists try to make a stereotypical image of a 'Muslim terrorist' which according to him has a political purpose. He argues that 'Hindu fascists, Zionists and Christian evangelicals form a triangle, which is basically deciding where India should go' in terms of domestic and foreign policy matters. According to him, '(t)he Hindu fascists are not only restricted within RSS and

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63 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=351 accessed on 9 November 2009.

64 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=62&pageid=212 accessed on 9 November 2009.

65 Field interview with Maulana Shafi Moonis on 1 December 2008.

66 Ibid.

BJP, even the Congress party has these elements' as in policy matters, 'they are all one'. He asserts that India imitates the American policy of 'targeting Islam and Muslims by linking them with terrorism'. In this regard, 'BJP and RSS openly say about it while Congress does not openly argue on those lines but they have certain prejudice on this matter'. He then holds that 'constructing a stereotypical image of a Muslim terrorist is linked to the plan of diverting the Muslims from launching an anti-establishment offensive to defend the community in the first place'.[67] He also maintains in the same interview that '(w)hen there is a denial of justice, there would not be peace, but this does not happen in case of Indian Muslims'. In other words, he argues that Indian Muslims do not take refuge in violent means of terrorism and rather opt for peaceful democratic oppositional protests against the denial of justice to the Muslim community.

It is worth mentioning here that Illiyas is actually pondering over the tactics of JIH to agitate in a 'peaceful democratic way' and trying to equate Jamaat and Indian Muslims as if Jamaat represents every section of Indian Muslims. In this chapter, we have already noticed this kind of equivalencing between Jamaat and Indian Muslims in Illiyas' statement about Muslim protests against 'imperialism' and the visit of American President George W. Bush. However, the Jamaat leadership recognizes that there are sections among Indian Muslims, which are interested in 'extremism' as we have seen in the interviews of Shafi Moonis and Jalaluddin Umari. When I asked Illiyas if he is arguing that there is no trace of terrorist elements among the Indian Muslim community even if it is a minuscule minority, he responded:

> 'I am not talking about militancy in Jammu & Kashmir. It is a different story. Definitely there is terrorism and we have already condemned it whatever kind of terrorism is happening in India. Who is responsible, God knows. Terrorism by individual, group or by the state has been strongly and vehemently condemned by us. It is definitely un-Islamic and not justified at all'.[68]

On 18 November 2008, the Jamaat organized a public rally in Kolkata as part of its fortnight long countrywide political programme of a 'Caravan for Peace and Justice'. I attended the public rally to note down the proceedings and later to talk to some leaders and activists on certain issues. The festoon in the stage stated that the caravan was organized (a) 'for communal harmony', (b) 'to hate and condemn terrorist activities', (c) 'to condemn yellow journalism' and (d) 'for peace and justice for all'. The central and regional Jamaat leadership unequivocally condemned all

67 Interview with Dr S. Q. R. Illiyas, 3 December 2008.

68 Ibid.

forms of terrorism as they argued that it is not only un-Islamic to kill people in the name of religion, but it also affects the normal health of society. They suggested that the culture of terrorism is opposed to Islamic principles of peace and justice. The then SIO president, Bishruddin Sharqi pointed out that Terrorism has its roots in poverty and unemployment, and it is related not only to religion but also to secular institutions like state terrorism.

Another important thrust of this public rally was to forcefully condemn those political and media discourses that relate Islam and Muslims with terrorism which in turn gives Muslims and Islam a bad name. The Jamaat leadership asserted that the Jewish funded international media is already doing this job of tarnishing the image of Muslims and Islam in creating an Islamophobia while campaigning against 'Islamic terror', and now the Indian media has also joined this bandwagon. They further argued that on the issue of terrorism, India has now adopted the American model of 'war on terror', which has only benefited the rightwing *Hindutva* forces. A Jamaat leader said that Muslims have been denied justice as no big leader has been punished in the case of the Babri demolition. Instead, draconian anti-terrorist laws like Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) have been selectively used to target Muslims. However, according to Rahmat Ali Khan, the Jamaat president in the state of West Bengal, the injustice and oppression of Muslims in Bengal is not like other states where communal riots, police high-handedness and branding of Muslims as 'terrorists' is prevalent. Rather, the injustice and oppression of Muslims in Bengal are of socio-economic nature with massive poverty and unemployment among Muslims. Thus, Muslims in India are victims of both communal and secular political establishments. The Jamaat leadership asserted that there is no justice and peace in the country and the Jamaat stands for justice for every marginalized, backward and weaker sections of population like Muslims, Dalits, Tribals, Christians, etc. Moreover, they pointed out that, today, the media is making a ghost out of terrorism while keeping the burning issues of poverty and unemployment out of the public debates. Dr Raisuddin Ahmed, ex-president of Jamaat in Bengal said that the promise of Indian nationalism with a united India falls apart with the rise of fragmented particular nationalisms soon after independence. Thus, Gandhi became a victim of Hindu nationalism while Indira Gandhi became a victim of Punjab nationalism and Rajiv Gandhi became a victim of Tamil nationalism. The assassinations of Gandhi, Indira and Rajiv were all terrorist activities and were done by non-Muslims and, thus, it is simply unjust to call that 'all Muslims are terrorists'. He further comments that currently India is witnessing the emergence of several sub-nationalisms like Gorkha agitation, Naga rebellions, ULFA activities in Assam and other secessionist groups in several north-eastern states. Thus, he further argued that when various nationalist struggles are not resolved politically and economically, then terrorism would inevitably erupt as a social menace. In this context, he concluded by saying that guaranteeing individual

liberty, religious freedom and settlement of economic and political grievances of the people are the foundations of justice. Therefore, economic and political grievances of Muslims should also be resolved immediately to counter a small minority of fringe groups among the Muslim community who, like fanatics, have used religion in justifying their unjust and un-Islamic terrorist acts.[69]

According to Jamaat leadership, in today's national and international context of rising Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice, when even legitimate grievances of Muslims are ignored, there is a pressing need for Muslims to make their presence felt in the political realm as well. According to the JIH President, Muslims should refrain from emotionalism and seek to struggle for their rights using all available peaceful and legal means. They must desist from any illegal or disruptive activity. In general, they should seek to create avenues of dialogue and build bridges with non-Muslims, including with the people in the media and political circles with genuine commitment to democracy and justice.[70]

It is interesting to note that like a well-knit cadre-based organization, there are some common standard answers to certain questions on Islam, Indian Muslims, terrorism, etc. The Jamaat leadership and activists have condemned terrorist attacks in the country as 'un-Islamic'. Besides condemning all forms of terrorism, the Jamaat is also blaming the media of bias in reporting the incidents while making a forced connection of Muslims and Islam with terrorist activities and, thus, creating a tarnished image of Islam and Muslims to what they call 'yellow journalism'. The Jamaat is particularly critical about the role of the media to foment mounting suspicion on Muslims as potential terrorists. In fact, they are now highlighting more on *Hindutva* groups as potential terrorists after the recent arrests of *Hindutva* activists in relation to Malegaon blasts.[71] As JIH leader Illiyas points out, '(i)t is only in recent times that we are listening about RSS hand in some bomb blasts in this country, when we raised questions about Nanded bomb blast and then Malegaon case was reinvestigated to find RSS connection. Otherwise, traditionally, the terrorism issue was essentially Muslim-centric'.[72] On the contrary, Jamaat is critical of the extremist approach of some groups including SIMI and emphasized that there is no 'alternative to peaceful democratic approach' to gain political success and public

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69 Views expressed by the JIH leadership on 18 November 2008 in a public rally in Kolkata. For specific demands of the Jamaat on the issue of terrorism, a campaign folder was distributed among the audience. See Appendix 21.

70 Interview with JIH President Syed Jalaluddin Umari on 4 December 2008.

71 The JIH public meeting in front of Delhi's Jama Masjid on 30 November 2008 highlighted more on RSS activities 'spreading terrorism'.

72 Interview with Dr S. Q. R. Illiyas, 3 December 2008.

acceptance than to take refuge in 'violent and coercive methods'.[73] The Jamaat leadership cites examples of participation in Parliamentary democratic politics by Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Turkish Refah Party in this connection. Given the past experience in the Muslim world, they think that Islamic movement can gain from peaceful democratic politics which is more 'practical' than 'immature' violent extremism.[74]

Against 'Western' cultural globalization: Positions on consumerism, live-in relationship, homosexuality, blasphemy and atheism

JIH is opposed to 'consumerism' and 'materialist culture' which they believe is an import from the 'Western capitalist world'. A Jamaat pamphlet points out that in contemporary India, '(c)raze of global brands and shopping mania has promoted unparalleled consumerism where people are being pushed to overspending and consumerism, creating burden of debts and psychological and lifestyle related diseases'.[75]

In this respect, JIH leader Illiyas pointed out that 'cultural globalization is a matter of concern' for Jamaat, particularly 'the way, Western culture is promoted by the media, the way our values are changing in the society and the way our new generation youth are getting Westernized in their cultural aspects', which according to him 'is creating many problems'. He argues that 'there are people in the government who want to legitimize gay culture, live-in relationships, nightclubs and bars' all of which are 'ruining our culture'. He views that the Jamaat wants the government to check these kinds of permissiveness in society and regulate the 'broadcast media' as it is 'promoting consumerism'. According to Illiyas, 'unfortunately both the UPA and NDA governments are unable to check this cultural globalization' as they are 'Westernized in their thinking and least concerned about this issue'. He further asserts that cultural globalization is not only a concern for Muslims alone 'but there are people who think that our Eastern culture is at stake' and, thus, the Jamaat is trying 'to initiate a dialogue with other religious groups by involving community leaders of Hindus, Christians and Sikhs to put pressure on the government so that it should stop the kinds of Westernized films and TV serials'. Illiyas argues that the Jamaat is 'concerned with both nakedness or nudity and commodification of

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73 Syed Jalaluddin Umari interviewed by Yoginder Sikand. Similar views were also expressed by Umari with my field interview on 4 December 2008.

74 Ibid.

75 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=111&pageid=555 accessed on 22 February 2010.

women in Western culture' and similarly 'the present Hindu society as a whole does not permit nudity and obscenity'. He argues that in Western culture, with 'no moral bonding and no moral values, the worst sufferer is women, particularly with the case of commercialization and commodification of women' and thus a clear case of 'violation of women's rights', which is equivalent to 'humiliation and torture of women under such a cultural regime'. This particular 'anti-women' nature of 'Western culture' according to Illiyas cannot be 'acceptable' since it has an 'anti-people nature' by 'ruining the women and fundamentally against the interests of women'.[76]

The Jammat's youth wing in Kerala, SYM, however, connects the 'consumerist hedonist culture' with capitalism:

> 'It is high time that the youth of our times who have degenerated to become mere job-seekers, selfish and worshippers of hedonistic pleasures are inspired by an ideology capable of true liberation. Retrogressive capitalistic materialism is a positive hindrance in the path of developing society in the true direction and of retrieving the energy and resources of youth for creative goals'.[77]

A press statement of SIO, Jamaat's student wing issued on 1 March 2009 places the demand to block all 'porn sites' and 'vulgar and obscene information' by introducing 'a National level backbone-filtering system' and to check cyber crimes.[78] Another SIO press statement issued from New Delhi on 17 April 2009 was against 'sex education' by welcoming 'the report of parliamentary committee that there should be no sex education in schools'. SIO had previously made a nationwide campaign that 'the proposed condom education program is unwise and ridiculous to be given to small school-going kids and that it will create adverse effect and will instigate uncontrolled sexual relationships in the young generation'.[79] Similarly, JIH people's manifesto places the following demands under 'Culture': '(a) Introduce backbone filter system to check vulgar and obscene contents in the Internet; (b) Censuring of all feature films should be made stringent to curb the menace of brazen sex and violence; (c) Bring legislation to control broadcast media so that the communal and social fabric of the society should not be disturbed; (d) Ban the trade and consumption of alcohol completely and (e) Implement the anti ragging law strictly'.[80] Similarly,

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76 Interview with Dr S. Q. R. Illiyas, 3 December 2008.

77 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves' collected on 2 December 2008.

78 http://sio-india.org/press/porn-sites-must-be-blocked-national-level-backbone-filtering-system-sio accessed on 26 November 2009.

79 http://sio-india.org/press/sio-welcomes-parliamentary-panel-report-sex-education accessed on 26 November 2009.

80 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=459 accessed on 5 October 2009.

the JIH programme argues that '(W)estern culture is having a detrimental effect on the family system'.[81]

In my field interviews, it was evident that live-in relationships and sexual freedom were identified with 'Western culture' and outrightly rejected as 'un-Islamic' and impermissible as argued by Jamaat's ex-President, Abdul Haq Ansari.[82] Regarding live-in relationship as a possible provision within Islam, I asked Illiyas about 'Muta' or temporary marriage among the Shia Muslims, which lasts from three days to three years, a sort of live-in relationship with only a marital tag on it. To my query, Illiyas responded that it is not permitted among Muslims in general and is only allowed among Shiites under specific conditions.[83]

On the charge of 'blasphemy' and 'insult to Prophet', Islamist political mobilizations took place against Salman Rushdie in 1989 after his book *Satanic Verses* was published. Similarly, Taslima Nasrin often faced the brunt of Islamist protests both in India and in Bangladesh after her book *Lajja* (*Shame*, 1993) was published, followed by series of Taslima's autobiographical writings.[84] In the past, we have also seen the Islamist opposition to alimony laws for divorced Muslim women in the case of Shah Bano (1986), and recently its staunch opposition to legalizing homosexuality in India. Although, all these cases are varied in context and content, one commonality among them is the peculiar Islamist political mobilization often using violence in some cases while using aggressive rhetoric in other cases in placing their demands. In India, JIH along with a number of Muslim groups, which previously supported a ban on Rushdie's book were arguing for banning the writings of Taslima Nasrin. They demanded that Ms Nasrin should leave the country and condemned the Indian government's permission to issue a visa extension to her.[85]

It was also interesting to note how in my field interviews, many Jamaat leaders described both Rushdie and Nasrin as 'Western agents'. In fact, they do not find any difference among Rushdie, Taslima and the Danish cartoonist. The rage and

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81 *JIH Policy and Programme*, pp 4–5.

82 Interview with ex-President of JIH, Dr Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari on 3 December 2008.

83 Interview with Dr S. Q. R. Illiyas, 3 December 2008. See Appendix 22.

84 Brinda Bose, 'The (Ubiquitous) F-Word: Musings on Feminisms and Censorships in South Asia', *Contemporary Women's Writing*, Vol. 1, No. 1–2 (December 2007), pp 14–23; Manmay Zafar, 'Under the gaze of the state: policing literature and the case of Taslima Nasrin', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (2005), pp 410–421; Manmay Zafar, 'Policing Literature, Disciplining Taslima: State Censorship in Postcolonial Bangladesh', in Sumanyu Satpathy, ed. *Southern Postcolonialisms: The Global South and the 'New' Literary Representations* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009), pp 155–183.

85 For JIH's position on Taslima Nasrin controversy see Appendix 23.

irritation against Taslima Nasrin has been witnessed not only among JIH but also among other Indian Muslim groups and community leaders based in various cities of India, who in turn took refuge to violent street demonstrations by damaging public property, tried to physically assault Ms Nasrin and threatened her life that compelled her to flee from India.[86]

JIH was also opposed to some contents of a school-level Kerala textbook on the ground that it 'professes atheism'. This opposition to atheism or any other religious or irreligious belief other than Islam is expressed in the SYM pamphlet:

> 'Solidarity understands that irreligiosity, fanaticism and the global spiritual trade conducted by the cultic god-men and god-women are the main obstacles in the path of social development. Hence, Solidarity is in the vanguard of the fight against tendencies threatening to extinguish the efforts of social revolution that uphold the interests of people'.[87]

In Kerala textbook controversy (2008), some aggressive Islamist rhetoric was noticed, demanding that the Kerala government should withdraw its policy of 'practicing atheism in school textbooks'.[88] In case of Kerala textbook controversy, the Jamaat argued that atheism is propagated by a communist government and a communist ideology is discarded by the Islamists as an 'atheistic, materialist, Western ideology' as eventually expressed by a number of Jamaat leaders in Kerala and Delhi during my fieldwork. In any case, Jamaati Islamism calls for a critique to all 'un-Islamic ideologies' and its mission against 'polytheism, atheism and such other false beliefs and ideologies, like the wrong concept of the unity of religions'.[89]

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86 Manjari Mishra, 'Muslim group sets ` 5 lakh on Taslima', *Times of India* (Lucknow), 17 March 2007; 'Imam issues Fatwa against Taslima', *Times of India* (Kolkata), 26 June 2006; 'Fatwa to blacken Taslima's face', *Hindustan Times* (Kolkata), 25 June 2006; 'Taslima roughed up in Hyderabad', *The Hindu*, 10 August 2007; 'Fatwa offers unlimited money to kill Taslima', *Hindustan Times* (Kolkata), 17 August 2007; 'Cry, Calcutta-Waves of anarchy bring army out', *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), Thursday, 22 November 2007; Marcus Dam, 'Army moves into Kolkata to quell violence', *The Hindu*, Thursday, 22 November 2007; 'Show of strength in protest parade', *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), Thursday, 22 November 2007; 'Army called in after violence in Park Circus', *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), Wednesday, 21 November 2007; 'Taslima in Jaipur, gifts BJP Gujarat revenge', *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), Friday, 23 November 2007; 'Taslima Nasreen shifted to Delhi', *The Hindu*, Saturday, 24 November 2007; Randeep Ramesh, 'Bangladeshi writer goes into hiding', *The Guardian* (London), Tuesday, 27 November 2007.

87 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves' collected on 2 December 2008.

88 Interview with T. Arif Ali, 13 January 2009 and field interview with T. K. Hussain on 11 January 2009.

89 *JIH Policy and Programme,* 2007–2011.

Like its staunch opposition to the question of blasphemy and atheism in the cases of Rushdie, Taslima and Kerala textbook controversy, the Jamaat is also opposed to homosexuality and live-in relationships as we have previously seen in the interviews of Illiyas regarding 'cultural globalization'. The JIH leader Illiyas justifies Jamaat's 'opposition to homosexuality' by arguing that it 'is definitely not permitted in Islam' and, thus, 'un-Islamic' besides being 'unnatural sex' and 'irrational act' which cannot be 'legitimized' even if one gets instances of homosexuals in Muslim history, since JIH is guided by Islamic codes and not precedence of 'punishable bad acts' by certain 'deviated Muslims'.[90] In the wake of the Delhi High Court's verdict to legalize consensual gay sex, a press note of JIH while quoting its Secretary General summarizes its dismissive position on homosexuality.[91]

Another press statement by the Maharashtra state wing of JIH has opposed homosexuality and the Delhi High Court judgement to scrap Section 377 that decriminalizes homosexuality between two consenting adults. According to this statement, homosexuality is 'aping the West' and associated with 'moral degradation' which would 'devastate and destruct (the) nation' by heading 'towards anarchy'. It defies the 'processes of civilization' and family life between a man and a woman. A homosexual person is condemned in the Jamaati discourse to 'commit crimes like spreading AIDS' and 'incapable of supporting and sustaining the future generation and, thus, damages the social system'. Scrapping of Section 377 is regarded by the Jamaat as antithetical to the 'cultural heritage' and 'religious values' of the country and its 'deeply religious people'. Finally, the Jamaat argues that '(t)he reasons upon which the Hon'ble High Court decriminalized sex between contentious adult of same sex, could also be applied to decriminalize the crimes such as adultery, pedophilia, Drugs consumption' and, thus, 'contra-views the spirit of constitution and also against the social and moral values of Indian civilization'. The JIH Maharashtra, therefore, requested 'the government to go and appeal in the Supreme Court against the Delhi High Court decision and see that Section 377 remains intact, imposing the ban on homosexuality'.[92] The strong opposition to gay rights is also expressed in a press statement of SIO issued from New Delhi on 3 July 2009 on similar grounds.[93] In my field interviews, I noticed that the Jamaat leadership in Lucknow were only opposed to 'western cultural globalization' and *Hindutva* than any substantial critique of neoliberalism and imperialism like the Jamaat leadership in Kerala and Delhi.

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90 Interview with Dr S. Q. R. Illiyas, 3 December 2008.

91 See Appendix 24.

92 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=61&pageid=483 accessed on 21 October 2009.

93 See Appendix 25.

It is now amply clear that JIH opposes consumerism, homosexuality, live-in relationship, blasphemy and atheism under the rubric of 'Western cultural globalization'. Therefore, by opposing these issues, it actually constructs a wider antagonistic frontier, namely the 'West'. In Chapter 6, I will further discuss about the dynamics of Jamaat's opposition to these issues and about continuous Islamist engagement with the 'West' by always posing the West as the enemy and make responsible for the economic and cultural 'miseries' of the Muslim societies within the framework of Islamist understanding of *jahiliya*.

Between Islamic universalism and Muslim particularism

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how JIH along with its youth organization SYM in Kerala takes up several issues of socio-political importance. Similarly, JIH with its most active mass organization among students, namely the SIO, generally takes up student and youth issues. A press release of SIO on 'nationwide campaign in campuses and universities' dated 6 July 2009 states how SIO is going to campaign for 'interfaith dialogue', 'green campus', 'Sanitation Awareness in Slum areas', 'Library Establishment in localities', 'helping disabled and old age persons', 'Orphan Sponsorship', 'single child adoption for education', 'Medical Check-up Camp', 'Eradicating Child Labor', etc.[94] Another SIO press statement issued on 1 March 2009 argues for anti-ragging law to be implemented 'urgently'.[95] SIO in recent past has been vocal against Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the education sector in India (See Appendix 26).

Besides SYM and SIO, JIH also has a women's wing which also takes care of a rather small Girl's Islamic Organisation (GIO). For the first time in JIH's history, a woman, K. K. Zuhaira was elected as the member of Majlis-e-Shoora (Central Advisory Committee) in 2007. She is the current President of Jamaat's Women's wing in Kerala. Also, there are two women (one Muslim and another non-Muslim) among the leadership of JIH-backed Welfare Party of India.[96] The issues taken up by JIH's women's wing are not fundamentally different from GIO. JIH leader, Zuhaira summarizes the viewpoint of women's wing and GIO by pointing out that its primary concerns are that of divorce, polygamy, women's education and jobs, security at workplace and women's reservation in elected bodies.[97]

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94 http://sio-india.org/press/sio-launch-massive-campaign-campuses-nation-wide accessed on 26 November 2009.

95 http://sio-india.org/press/law-ragging-must-be-enforced-urgently-sio/1235865600 accessed on 26 November 2009.

96 http://www.welfarepartyofindia.org/welfarepatry-leaders accessed on 29 June 2013.

97 Field interview with K.K. Zuhaira on 13 January 2009. See Appendix 27.

It must be noted that contrary to Jamaat founder, Maududi's views on women as 'the mightiest fortress of Islamic culture', and how Muslim women must be protected and kept within the household, or in seclusion and veil, apart from prescribing that women should not participate in politics and regarding women as naturally inferior to men, JIH was clearly changing its position on women from the 1970s by arguing that women have a positive role to play in all domains of life.[98] On the women's question, the JIH programme says, '(w)omen in particular, have been denied their due place in society and they are subjected to victimization and exploitation. The Jamaat shall pay special attention to restoring women a place of honour and dignity in society, protecting them from injustice and excesses, and enabling them to play an active role in society'.[99] Regarding the women's reservation bill, JIH is however demanding a sub-quota for Muslim women and OBCs in the present 33 per cent reservation for women in general. In this regard, a resolution was passed in the CAC meeting of JIH:

> 'The present form of the women reservation Bill, as passed in the Rajya Sabha is not acceptable. The apprehension of Muslim and other underrepresented sections is correct that the bill in its present form will further decrease their representation in legislative bodies. The CAC regards the demand of sub-quota for these sections as a necessary competent of the envisaged reservation and supports the introduction of such a quota'.[100]

The brief overview of the JIH programme says that it 'regards Islam as the authentic way of life revealed by the Creator of the universe; for all human beings. Accordingly, JIH invites all people towards submission to God (which is the literal meaning of Islam)'.[101] The JIH website clearly states that 'Islam is the ideology of the Jamaat. Its structure is based on its belief on the three-fold concept of the oneness and sovereignty of God (Monotheism), the Concept of Prophethood and the Concept of Life after Death. From these fundamentals of belief follow the concepts of unity of all mankind, the purposefulness of man's life, and the universality of the way of life taught by the Holy Prophet'.[102] It further claims the 'universality of Islamic way

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98 Irfan Ahmad, 'Cracks in the "Mightiest Fortress": Jamaat-e-Islami's Changing Discourse on Women', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 2–3 (March 2008), pp 549–575.

99 *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 4 and 9.

100 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=640 accessed on 26 April 2010.

101 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=126&blockid=31 accessed on 9 November 2009.

102 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=124&blockid=31 accessed on 9 November 2009

of life' while claiming that Islam, as an alternative 'ideology', is not a way of life only for Muslims, rather it is for whole of mankind (See Appendix 28).

JIH also argues that Islam is not just a private matter, but it also deals with public aspects as well and in this sense it is a 'complete way of life' by giving *answers* to 'man's fundamental questions'.[103] The JIH therefore argues that:

> 'Islam is not simply a compendium of religious rites and rituals. It is concerned with the overall approach of man to life in all its multiple aspects. Islam desires to convince human beings that only by a proper ordering of the whole of life on this planet in conformity with the Divine Guidance can they hope to realize their spiritual ambitions'.[104]

Thus, the Islamist ideology of Jamaat tries to pose itself as a universal ideology for all of humanity and not merely a particularist one articulating the demands of a particularist group of Muslims. The Jamaat does not recognize caste among Muslims and terms it as un-Islamic and, thus, conceptualizes Indian Muslims as part of a global homogenous 'Ummah' (community of believers) where religion and faith become the primary identity than any 'other' racial, linguistic, class and caste divisions.[105] Even if the Indian government recognizes caste among Indian Muslims by enlisting numerous Muslim communities in the OBC list, and several other studies had also clearly shown that there are caste differentiations among Indian Muslims, the JIH, during OBC reservation issue in 2006, made a press statement where it mentioned that Jamaat does not recognize caste within Islam. Moreover, it stated that in place of caste-based reservation, total Muslim reservation can be an effective way for addressing the issue of socio-economic and educational backwardness of the Muslim community. Later, the Jamaat changed its position on caste after the publication of Sachar Committee Report that recommended various forms of affirmative actions for *Ashrafs* (Upper caste Muslims), *Ajlafs* (Backward caste Muslims), and *Arzals* (Dalit Muslims) and also demanded reservation for Muslim backward castes and Muslim Dalits on the basis of Ranganath Misra Commission recommendations (See Appendix 31).

However, there are serious limits of such portrayal of universalism of Jamaati Islamism. In fact, its ideological articulations cannot overcome the strong notions of Muslim particularism in India despite its efforts to articulate an ideology of Islamic universalism. In this respect, one can see dual ideological articulations of Jamaat: one which claims to be Universalist by taking up issues of

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103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

105 Interview with ex-President of JIH, Dr Muhammad Abdul Haq Ansari on 3 December 2008; Interview with JIH President Syed Jalaluddin Umari on 4 December 2008.

the 'people' and varied sections of the population and another being particularist, specifically highlighting the issues related to Muslims. Such a double ideological articulation for 'people' and 'Muslims' can be noticed in the words of Illiyas in the context of Jamaat's caravan for justice and peace. Firstly, he argues that the Jamaat's approach was to give confidence to the Muslim community so that it should not feel alienated in the wake of countrywide terrorist attacks. Secondly, it wanted to expose the 'troublemakers' like RSS and 'ruling classes'. Thirdly, it wanted to raise the issues of livelihood, illiteracy, Dalits, Tribals, Women and Muslims apart from highlighting the stark difference between 'shining India' and the poverty in India.[106] The rhetoric of SYM also claims that it fights for different marginalized groups and its initiatives are 'pro-people'.[107] Such a view is echoed in the words of SYM leader:

> 'In Solidarity, we have a pro-people emphasis in launching social struggles and political movements while taking new initiatives. In the coming years we would concentrate on the issues of Adivasi and fishermen folk. Right now, Solidarity has three to four Adivasi units comprised of purely Adivasi people with no Muslims in those units. Here I must clarify that Solidarity membership is open to all and not only for Muslims'.[108]

In this respect, the people's manifesto of Jamaat before 2009 elections raised several demands for both Indian Muslims and several other social groups on the questions of 'social justice', 'Muslim reservation', 'Anti-terror laws', issues of backward regions like Jammu & Kashmir and North-east, about proportional representation of various communities in elected bodies, about women's issues, 'public accountability' and waqfs (See Appendix 31). However, the Universalist claims of Jamaat and its 'pro-people' agenda never overlook the particularist issues of Muslim community in general. This specific focus on issues of the Muslim minorities in India is what I have already called the 'politics of Muslim particularism'. The policy programme of JIH briefly points out the following on 'community issues':

> 'The Jamaat shall strive for Muslim community's safety and security, protection of its religions and cultural identity and its educational and economic advancement on the basis of Islamic principles. It would persuade Muslims to undertake collective efforts towards these goals'.[109]

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106 Interview with Dr S. Q. R. Illiyas, 3 December 2008. See Appendix 29.

107 SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves' collected on 2 December 2008. See Appendix 30.

108 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008.

109 *JIH Policy & Programme,* 2007–2011, p. 11.

Similarly, Article 3 of JIH's policy implications elaborate on (Muslim) community issues.[110] In this regard, JIH sets its target for 2007–2011 in its policy and programme saying:

> 'With the cooperation of other organizations and institutions, efforts would be made to improve the educational and economic status of Muslims to the extent of ten per cent with respect to the present level'.[111]

On Muslim community issues, a press statement dated 27 October 2009 shows how the SIO delegation visited the Ministry of Minority Affairs office to place their demands for Merit-cum-means scholarship, post- and pre-Matric scholarships for Muslim students.[112] The reservation and appropriate representation for Muslims in jobs and education was another major issue that was taken up by SYM in Kerala.[113]

At the time of my field interviews with the JIH leadership, the Jamaat was thinking of forming a political party in India that could take part in elections.[114] At that time, the Jamaat leadership maintained that it will continue to present its views and concerns to various secular democratic parties. In this respect, the Jamaat claims to work for the cause of 'genuine' democracy, for equal treatment by the state of all citizens, for social justice for all marginalized communities such as Dalits, Tribals, Christians, Sikhs as well as Muslims, and for countering communal fascism.[115] Finally, in 2011, some prominent members of Jamaat launched a political party called the *Welfare Party of India* (WPI), which would take care of 'marginalized groups besides Muslims, such as the poor, backwards and SCs/STs'[116] and whose ideological vantage points were 'value-based politics', 'welfare state' and 'religious pluralism'.[117]

The Welfare Party of India has Mujtaba Farooq (a senior JIH leader) as its president and S. Q. R. Illyas (another JIH leader) as its general secretary.[118] This is an important shift in the political approach of Jamaat from articulating a narrow sectarian politics of 'Muslim particularism' that was more focussed on

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110 Ibid, pp 15–16. See Appendix 32.

111 Ibid, p. 24.

112 http://sio-india.org/news/sio-ministry-minority-affairs accessed on 26 November 2009.

113 Interview with M. Sajid, 2 December 2008. See Appendix 33.

114 Known from interviewing Abdul Haq Ansari on 3 December 2008. Also, Syed Jalaluddin Umari interviewed by Yoginder Sikand. Similar views were also expressed by Umari with my field interview on 4 December 2008.

115 Ibid.

116 Seema Chisti, 'Jamaat-e-Islami Hind to launch its own party', *The Financial Express*, Thursday, 24 February 2011.

117 http://welfarepartyofindia.org/welfarepatry-mission accessed on 10 November 2013.

118 http://www.welfarepartyofindia.org/welfarepatry-leaders accessed on 29 June 2013.

issues and problems related to Indian Muslims till very recently to take up issues of other marginalized groups like backward castes and other victims of communal violence like Christians and Sikhs. Jamaat's current shift in political attitude in addressing several significant political issues can have far reaching effects in shaping public opinion among Indian Muslims. However, so far, WPI failed to make any significant impact in various elections in India. In the Jangipur Lok Sabha bye-elections in the state of West Bengal, held in October 2012, the WPI candidate came fourth with 4.90 per cent votes behind the Congress, CPI(M) and BJP candidates, respectively.[119] In May 2013 Karnataka Assembly elections, the Welfare Party contested in 12 seats. The party managed to get less than 1 per cent votes in 10 seats, over 1 per cent votes in one seat and just over 2 per cent votes in one seat.[120] The Election Commission of India data shows that in 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the WPI contested in 25 seats and polled a meagre 0.04 per cent votes.

Construction and limits of Islamist populism in India

In the light of Jamaat's rhetoric and political initiatives that I have discussed so far, it can be argued that JIH seems to articulate a politics of (Islamist) 'populism' by trying to organize and participate in 'popular' movements. The terms 'popular' and 'populism' is used here in the same sense as Laclau has used in his several evocative works. To summarize: *it is a hegemonic formation of the underdogs constructed through an equivalential articulation of various particularist demands challenging an antagonistic frontier of another hegemonic formation of the power bloc*. As Laclau observes that 'in the case of populism: a frontier of exclusion divides society into two camps. The "people", in that case, is something less than the totality of the members of the community: it is a partial component which nevertheless aspires to be conceived as the only legitimate totality'.[121]

One can notice how JIH in numerous occasions has come out with a charter of demands before the power bloc, whatever that nature of power bloc might be, whether it is state government, Central government, mainstream political parties or corporate capital. One can also notice that some of JIH's demands were fulfilled and some were unfulfilled. Laclau argues that a demand initially 'is perhaps only a request'.[122] If the demand is satisfied, then 'that is the end of the matter; but if it is not, people can start to perceive equally unsatisfied demands'.[123] According to Laclau, if the

119 *The Telegraph (Kolkata)*, 14 October 2012.
120 Chief Electoral Officer in Karnataka Data.
121 Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, p. 81.
122 Ibid, p. 73.
123 Ibid.

situation of unfulfilled demands remains unchanged for some time, then there is a possibility of 'an accumulation of unfulfilled demands and an increasing inability of the institutional system to absorb them in a differential way (each in isolation from others), and an equivalential relation is established between them'.[124] This might result into 'a widening chasm separating the institutional system from the people'.[125] So in such a context, 'the formation of an internal frontier, a dichotomization of the local political spectrum through the emergence of an equivalential chain of unsatisfied demands' might take place.[126] In such a situation, the 'requests' might turn into 'claims'.[127] Here, Laclau clarifies that 'a demand which, satisfied or not, remains isolated (is) a democratic demand', whereas '(a) plurality of demands which, through their equivalential articulation, constitute a broader social subjectivity' can be called 'popular demands'.[128] 'Popular demands' according to Laclau, 'start, at a very incipient level, to constitute the "people" as a potential historical actor'.[129] This particular moment of constituting the 'people' as a potential historical actor is what Laclau calls the embryonic stage of 'a populist configuration'.[130] So, Laclau points out two preconditions of populism: '(a) the formation of an internal antagonistic frontier separating the "people" from power and (b) an equivalential articulation of demands making the emergence of the "people" possible'.[131] For Laclau, 'there is a third precondition which does not really arise until the political mobilization has reached a higher level: the unification of these various demands—whose equivalence, up to that point, had not gone beyond a feeling of vague solidarity—into a stable system of signification'.[132] In the case of Jamaat, one has to understand the transition and non-transition of 'democratic demands' to 'popular demands'. Here, the caveat is that democratic demands 'can be accommodated within an expanding hegemonic formation' while popular demands 'present a challenge to the hegemonic formation as such'.[133] I will later on identify which demands of JIH are 'democratic' and how far they are able to transform those democratic demands into 'popular ones'.

Therefore, from a Laclauian perspective, if a popular politics or a populist configuration has identified an antagonistic frontier of the 'people', like the

124 Ibid.
125 Ibid, p. 74.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
133 Ibid, p. 82.

chain of antagonistic frontiers identified by the JIH in 'imperialism', 'neoliberal capitalism', '*Hindutva*', 'Indian state', 'ruling/elite classes', 'corporate capital', etc. then the democratic demands of a particularist group like Indian Muslims should ideally be supplemented with an agenda of making an equivalential relation with other democratic demands of oppressed, exploited and excluded groups of Dalits, tribals, women, working class, peasantry, etc. and transform those aggregated demands to popular demand of challenging the current political cum policy regime of neoliberal hegemony. It seems that the Indian Jamaat is trying to construct a politics of 'Islamist populism' by articulating the democratic demands of different marginalized sections of the population while identifying the antagonistic frontier of 'neoliberal regime' and 'Western imperialism' as *root causes* of most pressing problems for the 'Indian people'. If the democratic demands of one or several particularist groups are unfulfilled, then the accumulation of those unfulfilled democratic demands of various sectors of population in fact gives opportunity for populist politics to politically articulate a much greater populist demand to challenge the power bloc. Laclau proclaims that '(t)he frustration of a series of social demands makes possible the movement from isolated democratic demands to equivalential popular ones'.[134] The first dimension of such a break from unsatisfied democratic demands to popular ones is that 'at its root, there is the experience of a *lack*, a gap which has emerged in the harmonious continuity of the social'.[135] Laclau suggests that in such a circumstance, '(t)here is a fullness of the community which is missing' and this is 'decisive' because 'the construction of the "people" will be the attempt to give a name to that absent fullness'.[136] As Laclau argues:

> '(w)ithout this initial breakdown of something in the social order – however minimal that something could initially be – there is no possibility of antagonism, frontier, or, ultimately, "people". This initial experience is not just, however, an experience of lack. Lack is linked to a demand which is not met. But this involves bringing into the picture the power which has not met the demand. A demand is always addressed to somebody. So from the very beginning, we are confronted with a dichotomic division between unfulfilled social demands, on the one hand, and an unresponsive power, on the other'. [137]

Thus, according to Laclau, 'the movement from democratic to popular demands presupposes a plurality of subject positions: demands, isolated at the beginning,

134 Ibid, p. 85.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid, pp 85–86.

emerge at different points of the social fabric and the transition to a popular subjectivity consists in establishing an equivalential bond between them'.[138]

However, the challenge for any populist politics emerges when the power bloc is able to satisfy/fulfil/accommodate particularist democratic demands in differential manner, 'each in isolation from others'. Moreover, as we have learnt from Laclau that if the democratic demand has been met by the power bloc in the first instance, then 'that is the end of matter' giving no scope for a populist mobilization out of unsatisfied democratic demand(s) to be transformed into popular one(s) to challenge the power bloc. Recall Laclau's above observation: 'democratic demands' can be 'accommodated within an expanding hegemonic formation', whereas 'popular demands present a challenge to the hegemonic formation'.[139] In fact, in India, the policy of affirmative action and compensation in many capitalist developmental projects can be seen as such accomodationist strategies of the power bloc to absorb the democratic demands of various particularist groups in a differential way, one isolated from the other because the unfulfilment of such democratic demands could open up the possibility of transforming those very democratic demands into popular ones with the help of an equivalential articulation with other democratic demands of various particularist groups that together and unitedly can challenge the hegemonic formation of the contemporary neoliberal power bloc. Much of Indian politics has been what Laclau calls the transformation from 'requests to claims' by various particular political actors and the fulfilment of several democratic demands by the ruling power bloc to sustain *status quo* on the one hand, and the hindrances to the transformation of democratic demands to popular demands by the power bloc on the other.

This is why the specific politics of particularist *demands* for and around affirmative action, and the fulfilment of the same are nothing short of a politics

138 Ibid. p. 86.

139 Laclau's distinction between democratic and popular demands is based on the Marxist distinction of bourgeois-democratic or liberal-democratic and socialist demands. As Laclau argues, 'democratic demands were inherently bourgeois, and essentially linked to the establishment of "liberal-democratic" regimes. Different from the (bourgeois)-democratic demands were the socialist ones, which involved transcending capitalist society and corresponded to a more advanced stage of historical development… So the main distinction was between socialist and democratic demands; the inscription of the latter within bourgeois hegemony and the establishment of a liberal state were taken for granted'. See Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, pp 125–126. However, the criteria for which Laclau uses the term *democratic demand* are of the following: (1) 'these demands are formulated *to* the system *by* an underdog of sorts—that there is an equalitarian dimension implicit in them; (2) that their very emergence presupposes some kind of exclusion or deprivation' to what Laclau calls 'deficient being'. See Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, p. 125.

of *appropriation* and *accommodation* by the power bloc to close down the possibility of a politics of radical alternative that seeks to alter the power relations of the prevalent society in favour of the 'people'. In this process of articulation of *demands* by separate and particularist groups like different excluded and marginalized sections of the population, namely Dalits, tribals, women and Muslims and the *fulfilment of those demands in differential manner or in isolation* by the power bloc makes the construction of an equivalential chain of various demands and groups difficult. It is in this context that the politics and policy around affirmative action becomes intimately connected to the politics of power bloc while accommodating/absorbing the democratic demands of various particularist groups like Dalits, tribals, women, OBCs and Muslims. As a result of the lack of an equivalential chain among the above-mentioned marginalized and excluded groups and the absence of an equivalential chain in their articulation of demands, the construction of the 'people' and its fight against a common antagonistic frontier also takes a back seat.

The discussions in the last two chapters so far have demonstrated how JIH along with its mass organizations like SYM, SIO and GIO have tried to raise issues of various marginalized groups like farmers, workers, Dalits, tribals, Muslims, women and other minorities. At the same time, JIH has also been arguing that 'imperialism', 'neoliberal capitalism', 'majoritarian communalism' and 'Western cultural globalization' pose great threat to the 'people' at large. It is, thus, interesting to note that JIH simultaneously tries to articulate concerns and demands for particularist groups like the farmers, workers, students, backward castes, Muslims, etc. and a larger universal category like the 'people'. It is indeed worth thinking whether Islamism elaborates the *meaning* of the *people* in a Laclauian sense of identifying the 'people' with 'plebs' or 'underdogs'. As Laclau, incisively points out, 'traditional terminology – which has been translated into common language – makes this difference clear: the people can be conceived as *populus*, the body of all citizens, or as *plebs*, the underprivileged'.[140] Laclau's further clarification regarding 'people' and 'populism' conceptually differs from the usual meaning in the dominant political discourses: 'in order to be the "people" of populism, we need a *plebs* who claims to be the only legitimate *populus* – that is, a partiality which wants to function as the totality of the community'.[141] This is because those sections of the population which are responsible for the underprivileged conditions of the *plebs* cannot be the legitimate part of the same community ('people' in this case) since the *plebs* are in an antagonistic relationship with a frontier made up by the rest of the population which are part of the power bloc and, thus, the chasm between them is 'irretrievable'. [142]

140 Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, p. 81.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid, p. 86.

The 'people' as a collective political actor might not play the historic role of representing an emancipatory politics of counter-hegemony without equivalential articulations of various marginalized sections of population as mentioned above. To put in theoretical terms in the words of Laclau, '(t)he universal is incommensurable with the particular, but cannot, however, exist without the latter'.[143] Therefore, the particular is important so far as constructing the universal is concerned. At the same time, the particular demands can be properly realized when they become a part of a larger universal political agenda. As Laclau points out, 'difference and particularisms are the necessary starting point, but out of it, it is possible to open the way to a relative universalization of values which can be the basis for a popular hegemony, the particular can only fully realize itself if it constantly keeps open, and constantly redefines, its relation to the universal'.[144] In successfully constructing an agenda of populism, Laclau argues that one should consider 'the underdog, a *plebs* claiming to be the *populus*' and should not exclude 'any notion of antagonism or internal division'.[145] It should not conceive *people* 'as an *a priori* homogenous entity postulated from a centre of power which, instead of being the social precipitate of an equivalential interaction of democratic demands, is seen as determining an identical substance that any demand expresses'.[146] If it conceives 'people' as an '*a priori* homogenous entity', then Laclau warns us that 'the internal split inherent in any democratic demand within the equivalential chain collapses; the "people" loses its internal differentiations and is reduced to a substantial unity. The "people" can still be conceived as a radical force opposed to the existing *status quo*, but it is no longer an underdog: the essential heterogeneity which is the basis of any populist identity has been surrendered and replaced by a homogenous unity'.[147] That is to say, the *universality* and *unity* of the *people* cannot be successfully constructed without taking into account the distinct *particularities* embedded within any given set of population.

With this theoretical framework of Laclau in the background, the politico-ideological articulations of Jamaat, as seen in the last and present chapters, are however, replete with what one can call (a) 'politics of Muslim particularism', (b) 'politics of resistance' and (c) 'politics of the people'. The 'politics of Muslim particularism' specifically highlights the issues of Muslim education, security, employment and socio-economic development. The 'politics of resistance' against the antagonistic frontier of contemporary neoliberal policy regime in India is expressed in its oppositional voice to SEZ, land grab, FDI, IMF–World Bank dependent

143 Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 35.
144 Ibid, p. 65.
145 Laclau, *On Populist Reason*, p. 209.
146 Ibid, p. 208.
147 Ibid.

economic policies along with anti-US, anti-Israel thrust, a call for reviving NAM, and collaboration with SAARC and other third world countries in foreign policy matters. The 'politics of the people' is represented by its focus of overall socio-economic development, right to livelihood, right to justice, and security and equity issues for varied marginalized sectors of the population like Dalits, tribals, women, backward classes, other minorities, workers and peasants apart from a call for infrastructural and law and order developments in regional backward pockets like Jammu & Kashmir and North-east. The 'politics of resistance' and 'politics of the people' by Jamaat with an Islamist rhetoric and justification together takes shape of what I call the politics of 'Islamist populism'.

But Islamism also articulates a 'politics of Muslim particularism' with specific narrow political interests for its constituency even if it claims to represent 'humanity/mankind' and try to address the injustices faced by several marginalized non-Muslim sections of the population like Dalits, tribals and other minorities in India. However, the successful construction of the 'people' under the banner of Jamaati Islamism with equivalential relations between particularist groups like Dalits, tribals, religious minorities, etc. has not been possible due to lack of *identification* of those very constituencies with Islamism, which JIH aspires to rally behind its political project. Furthermore, JIH, while trying to make an equivalential articulation between various marginalized and excluded groups like Dalits, tribals, OBCs, women and other religious minorities, neglects the 'class identities' like working classes and the peasantry into its organizational forum/platform. This is evident from Jamaat's organizational activities among students, youth, women and on a minor scale, even among the Muslim middle classes, like among a section of Muslim teachers and professionals with the initiatives of APCR[148], but it has no organizational presence among working classes and the peasantry. The lack of any mass organizations of Jamaat among the working classes and peasantry – arguably the worst sufferers of neoliberal policy regime and significantly a major chunk of population is an empirical reality.

Theoretically speaking, the Indian Jamaat is struggling with its own ideological contradictions between choosing the *Ummah* as the universal emancipatory actor, or the 'people' as a universal political actor. The former excludes the non-Muslims, whereas the latter ideally includes all the plebian constituencies. Thus, JIH is puzzled on the issue for who would lead the politics of emancipation for an 'Islamist alternative' against its identified chain of antagonistic frontiers/power bloc(s). This is precisely because of its traditional emphasis on the centrality of the *Ummah* and the Islamic party playing the role of a vanguard, with Maududian vision of '*Saleh Jamaat*

[148] Association for Protection of Civil Rights, a human rights organisation backed by JIH.

(a righteous group) or a "holy minority" that would one day capture political power and establish the Islamic system in its entirety'.[149] This central emphasis on Islamic *Ummah* as the harbinger of Islamic revolution or establishment of Islam while fighting against 'non-Islamic' ideologies can be traced in the JIH programme.[150]

The concept of *Ummah* has an attached internationalist connotation as I have clarified in the 'Introduction' of this book. The internationalist character and appeal of *Ummah* has been always highlighted by many Islamist groups including the Jamaat by perceiving an expected global solidarity among Muslims throughout the world cutting across nation-states. However, in the last two chapters, one can see that the JIH's politico-ideological position on contemporary foreign and economic policies of India is often replete with nationalist overtones (reminiscent of Nehruvian economic and foreign policies) against the international incursions of global powers and corporations. By contrast, on the issue of 'western cultural globalization' the Jamaat's response was a conservative nationalist one. Moreover, the JIH has not only accepted the secular constitution of India but it has also accepted the basic norms of Indian democracy. It has not only supported various political formations, made political alliances with several political forces but has also floated the Welfare Party of India as its political outfit to participate in elections. In such a situation, the JIH is more negotiating with the nation-state while championing certain national legacies of India without blindly cherishing the internationalism of the Muslim *Ummah*. Such a stance might have some organizational compulsion and thus needed some tactical adjustments since the JIH had to operate within the geographical confines of the Indian nation-state. However, this is not always true as it is clear from the rhetoric of JIH leadership that it has moved on from Maududi's rhetoric against nationalism and his call for internationalist solidarity of the Muslim *Ummah*. Finally, as a Muslim political group, it also has pressures from the *Hindutva* right to prove its loyalty and allegiance to the Indian nation-state. In this context, Jamaat's ideological contradiction stands exposed between either showing allegiance to the nation-state or the internationalist emotional appeal of the unity of the *Ummah*.

Jamaat's contradiction can be also conceptualized as the contradiction of non-identification and misconstruction of the universal political actor, namely the 'people'. In an era of various particularist struggles, it is difficult for the 'Muslim Ummah' *alone* to become the universal political actor, who can represent and articulate the voice of other marginalized and oppressed sections of population or speak on behalf of entire plebeian society. Since the 'people' in the Indian context is a much broader and comprehensive political category and an *inclusive collective political actor* which

149 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 466.
150 *JIH Policy and Programme*, pp 7–8. See Appendix 34.

encompasses varied plebeian and underprivileged groups, the Muslim *Ummah* itself has become a form of particularism like other marginalized particular socio-political actors like peasants, Dalits, tribals, working class and women. Therefore, without shedding its particular religious mission of 'Islamic alternative' and a particular religious identity, it will be difficult for Jamaat to become the representative of the 'people' against what it calls the 'onslaught of neoliberalism'. All these factors evidently explain the lack of political mobilization behind Islamism in India and its marginalization in Indian politics. As a result, JIH has to continuously articulate its politics around the democratic demands for its core Muslim constituency to be only recognized in the political mainstream as a pressure group of the Indian Muslims.

I have already argued that the power bloc would be rather content with absorbing/accommodating particularist democratic demands and, so far, it has tried to play a politics of accommodation by offering affirmative action and reservation to excluded groups and offering compensation to a set of affected people in capitalist developmental projects. Similarly, in a neoliberal India, the Indian government as a power bloc, has also promised different forms of affirmative actions for Muslims as I have pointed out in the previous chapter. JIH as a Muslim pressure group, fighting for mere *particularist demands* for narrow-sectarian interests of any single community like the Indian Muslims is not going to help in taking forward the agenda of changing the current *status quo* of neoliberal dispensation. This is because 'a politics of pure particularism is self defeating'[151] since it cannot assemble 'other' particularist demands and, therefore, unable to articulate a Universalist political project of emancipation. This is the precise limit of Islamist populism in India, where Islamism despite being particularist tries to become Universalist but actually cannot become a Universalist politics of the 'people'.

However, the limits of Islamist populism does not only end with the lack of political mobilization from varied excluded groups, but is also reflected in terms of Jamaat's weak organizational presence among Indian Muslims as well, which I have already pointed out in this chapter. So, how can one explain the lack of popularity of Jamaat and its inability to become the vanguard of the Indian Muslims despite its effort to be seen as a 'Muslim pressure group'? First, since the category of 'universal' is 'a highly unstable figure'[152], the Islamist concept of *Ummah* as a universal identity for Muslims is difficult to construct because Indian Muslims are divided by several particularist identities like language, caste and gender. As Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that 'a "community" based on the loyalties of religion, language, habitat,

[151] Ernesto Laclau's Reply to Judith Butler: Judith Butler and Ernesto Laclau, 'The Uses of Equality', in Simon Critchley and Oliver Marchart (eds.), *Laclau: A Critical Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 331.

[152] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, p. 13.

kinship and the like could only be ambiguous because a "community" defined by such loyalties was necessarily a self-contradictory entity. People sharing the same religion, for example, could be divided by language (or habitat) and vice versa'.[153] Indeed, one can notice the heterogeneous nature of Indian Muslims, fragmented on linguistic, cultural, caste lines[154] and having traditional loyalties to various theological and spiritual formations like Deobandis,[155] Barelvis,[156] Tablighis[157] and Sufi inclinations.[158]

JIH has been more rhetorical when arguing for an 'Islamic alternative' rather than actually believing in establishing such an Islamic alternative for that would require establishing an Islamic state, which JIH has dropped from its constitution[159] as the desired political goal while accepting Indian democracy, constitution and secularism way back in the 1960s and 1970s.[160] Therefore, there is a gap between Jamaat's theoretical promise and practical performance in implementing the project of 'Islamic alternative'. In a Muslim minority context, JIH operating under a secular constitutional framework 'had no option but to abandon the goal of establishing an Islamic state in India'[161] by deleting 'all

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153 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal, 1890–1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 216.

154 Imtiaz Ahmad (ed.), *Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims in India* (Delhi: Manohar, 1973); Imtiaz Ahmad, *Family, Kinship and Marriage among Muslims in India* (Delhi: Manohar, 1976); Imtiaz Ahmad, *Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1981).

155 Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Barbara D. Metcalf, *'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs* (Leiden: ISIM, 2002).

156 Muhammad Haroon, *The World Importance of Imam Ahmed Raza Khan Barelvi* (Stockport: Raza Academy, 1994); Usha Sanyal, *Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmed Riza Khan Barelvi and His movement, 1870–1920* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

157 Yoginder Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jam'aat* (1920–2000)*: A Cross-Country Comparative Study* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2002); Yoginder Sikand, 'The Tablighi Jama'at in Post-1947 Mewat', in Nadeem Hasnain (ed.), *Islam and Muslim Communities in South Asia* (New Delhi: Serials Publications, 2006); S. Anwarul Haq, *The Faith Movement of Maulana Mohammad Ilyas* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1972).

158 Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, *Impact of Sufism on Indian Society* (New Delhi: Centre for Contemporary Studies, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 1996); Nile Green, *Indian Sufism since the Seventeenth Century: Saints, Books and Empires in the Muslim Deccan* (London: Routledge, 2006).

159 *The Constitution of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind*, English version from the original in Urdu as Amended up to April 2007 (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2009).

160 Ahmad, *Islamism and Democracy in India*, pp 198–214, p. 229.

161 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 503.

references to the goal of establishing an Islamic state from its programme of action',[162] a goal that is a prime concern for Bangladeshi Jamaat as I will discuss in Chapters 4 and 5. Thus, where establishing an Islamic alternative is a rare possibility, the Indian Jamaat cannot offer any concrete political imagination of an Islamic state, to which its core constituency of Indian Muslims can at least look for a political option to be mobilized. Moreover, the political space of pressure group politics among the Indian Muslims is in fact competitive and fragmented between rival factions of Indian Muslims showing allegiance to various Muslim groups, with political overtones ranging from Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, AIMIM and IUML and the Muslim leadership among mainstream political parties as pointed out earlier in Chapter 2.

However, beyond the contradictions of Islamist populism, it is evident from our discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 that JIH tries to pose a *protest politics* against various forms of power bloc. It has also tried to *reject* non-Islamic ideologies while talking about 'Islamic alternative' although it has limits in implanting the 'Islamic alternative' in a Muslim minority context. Furthermore, JIH tries to *negotiate* with the modern forms of development projects and capital–state power bloc. But certainly, there is no case for JIH to call as a 'return of the repressed' or being subservient to 'neoliberal hegemony'. Now, after overviewing the politico-ideological articulations of contemporary JIH against what they call 'capitalistic-imperialism', its proximity and tactical alliance with the Left and its similarities in the understanding of 'neoliberal economic policies' and 'foreign policy shift' of India, can we argue that JIH is actually trying to champion a class politics similar to the Left? Here, I argue that the matter is more complex than it is apparently seen. I have pointed out earlier that JIH has no organizational base among the Left's basic classes of workers and peasants. Moreover, it seems to protest against many issues of contemporary India – effects of 'American imperialism' in foreign policy, 'exploitation of neoliberal capitalism', 'environmental hazards', 'inequalities between rich and poor', and deprivation and marginalization of varied identitarian social groups including Muslims, Dalits, tribals, other minorities, women, etc. In other words, it tries to construct a political project of 'Islamist populism' by trying to mobilize varied plebian sections of population with the call of 'Islamic way' rather than emphasizing on 'class struggle'. In fact, contemporary 'globalized capitalism' provides such space and scope for multifarious struggles than simply class-based struggle. As Laclau proclaims:

> 'Capitalist development creates many others: ecological crises, imbalances between different sectors of the economy, imperialist exploitation, etc. In

162 Ibid, p. 505.

> that case, the subjects of an "anti-capitalist" struggle are many and cannot be reduced to a category as simple as that of "class". We are going to have a plurality of struggles. Struggles in our society tend to proliferate the more we move into a globalized era, but they are less and less "class" struggles. Could we argue that, however, there is in capitalist societies – as Marx believed in the nineteenth century – an inner tendency to the simplification of social structure so that we are advancing towards a situation in which we would have, as the final showdown of history, a simple confrontation between workers and capitalists? To take a brief glance at what goes on in contemporary societies is enough to brush aside this objection without further ado'.[163]

But can this anti-capitalist struggle propounded by JIH be present within the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh? That is precisely the topic of discussion in the next couple of chapters. Therefore, let me now venture into the specific Bangladeshi context in which Islamism became a significant political force and briefly account its success and failure in hegemonizing the political field of India's neighbouring country.

163 Ernesto Laclau, 'Ideology and post-Marxism', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 2006), p. 112.

4

Islamism in a Muslim Majority Context

The Case of Bangladesh

In the previous two chapters, I have discussed the ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism in a Muslim minority context of India. In the following two chapters, I will focus on the ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism in the Muslim majority country of Bangladesh, a close neighbour of India. But before doing so, it is important to briefly discuss the politico-ideological background under which the rise of Islamist forces like Jamaat in Bangladesh became possible.

Bangladesh had a glorious history of liberation under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib's Awami League in the early 1970s. Despite the fact that the US, a major superpower, 'extended overwhelming support towards Pakistan during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971',[1] the Bangladeshi people fought a successful liberation war with secular-nationalist vision and emerged as an independent nation-state by seceding from Pakistan. During the Bangladesh liberation war, both the cold war politics and the South Asian regional dynamics came into play when Pakistan got the support of both the US and China, while Sheikh

[1] A. B. M. Mosleh Uddin, 'Personal Prejudice in Foreign Policy Making: Nixon's Role in South Asia during Bangladesh Liberation War Revisited', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Humanities)*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (December 2008), p. 161. On US support to Pakistan during Bangladesh Liberation War and later the US intervention to overthrow the Mujib government, see Lawrence Lifschultz, *Bangladesh: The Unfinished Revolution* (London: Zed Press, 1979), pp 103–202.

Mujib got help from India, known as a Soviet Union ally at that time.[2] When Bangladesh faced the famine of 1974, the decision of the US government to call-off food shipments on the pretext that Bangladesh was a 'communist ally' led to a grave 'national tragedy'.[3] The US policy to contain 'socialism' in Bangladesh partly facilitated the environment for the emergence of 'anti-US Islamism' in the country.[4]

In the recent past, Bangladesh has witnessed an Islamic conservative ascendancy with the rise of *Jamaat-e-Islami* and other Islamist forces.[5] It is interesting to note that the same *Jamaat-e-Islami*, which opposed the creation of Bangladesh as a separate nation-state from Pakistan, till recently, enjoyed political power in alliance with a coalition government led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Begum Khaleda Zia from 2001 to 2006. Thus, independent Bangladesh saw a shift of the political discourse of secular-nationalism, the cherished principle of Bangladeshi freedom struggle towards Islamist tendencies in the recent past.[6]

In ontical terms, the major politico-ideological debates in Bangladesh can be located first in the Bengali language movement after partition in the 1950s, followed by the call for regional autonomy of Bangladesh, and subsequently, liberation war with the rise of Sheikh Mujib from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s.[7] After Mujib's assassination, the successive military regimes of General Zia-ur-Rahman (1976–81) and General Ershad (1982–1990) transformed Bangladesh from a secular to an Islamic country with changes in the constitution and calling off the ban on religious parties imposed by Mujib. Finally, from the 1990s onwards, Bangladesh is groping with conflicts between the restoration of democracy and political intervention of the military in national politics. In this context, it is absolutely necessary to unravel Jamaat's position in various politico-ideological debates in Bangladesh and its role in the major political events like the Language movement, Liberation war and the present tussle between military and democratic regimes.

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2 Habibul Haque Khondker, 'US Imperialism and Bengali Nationalism', in Vedi R. Hadiz, ed. *Empire and Neoliberalism in Asia* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp 234–235.

3 Ibid, p. 234.

4 Ibid, p. 235.

5 Partha S. Ghosh, 'Conservative Ascendancy in Bangladesh,' *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2005), pp 247–265.

6 Emajuddin Ahmed and D. R. J. A. Nazneen, 'Islam in Bangladesh: Revivalism or Power Politics?', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 30, No. 8 (August 1990), pp 795–808; Satish Kumar, 'How Did Bangladesh Become an Epicentre of Islamic Terrorism,' *Peace and Conflict*, Vol. 8, No. 5 (May 2005), pp 6–7.

7 Badruddin Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh, Vol. 2: Rise of Bengali Nationalism (1958–1971)* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006).

But what were the specific conditions under which the emergence of Jamaati Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh was possible? To do so, first, a survey of the existing accounts of the emergence of Islamism in Bangladesh needs to be done.

The emergence of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh: Existing accounts

Failure of secular–nationalist Mujibism

When the Constitution of Bangladesh was adopted in 1972, 'democracy', 'socialism', 'secularism' and 'nationalism' were included as four fundamental principles of a new 'sovereign people's republic' of Bangladesh.[8] During the brief secular–nationalist regime of Sheikh Mujib from 1971 to 1975, Jamaat was widely discredited due to its opposition to the very creation of Bangladesh. In fact, political parties articulating a theo-political discourse by using religious vocabulary and symbols like the Muslim League, Jamaat and Nejame Islam, which had also 'collaborated with the Pakistan army during the (Bangladesh) liberation war were outlawed' by the Mujib regime.[9]

In this respect, the rise of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh has been often argued in terms of the failure of secular–nationalist Mujibism in addressing the basic livelihood issues of the Bangladeshi people. The prominence of Jamaati Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh has been linked to the inability of both liberal and socialist models of development under secular–nationalist project of Sheikh Mujib to eradicate poverty after the creation of Bangladesh.[10] During the first half of the 1970s, the Mujib regime could not also check high degree of malnutrition among the populace and was unable to protect the country's principal cash crop, jute, upon which much of Bangladeshi economy was dependent.[11]

During the Mujib regime, the country also witnessed industrial decline, Indian control over Bangladesh's industry and commerce, fake currency notes scandal, scarcity of food items coupled with falling income of the population and simultaneous soaring of prices due to hyper inflation, subsequently followed by the

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8 Anisuzzaman, 'Religion and Politics in Bangladesh', in Sukha Ranjan Chakravarty, ed. *Society, Polity and Economy of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1994), pp 41–42.

9 Ibid, p. 42.

10 During Mujib's rule, urban poverty in 1973-74 was as high as 63.2 per cent and rural poverty was a chronic 71.3 per cent. See Binayak Sen, 'Growth, Poverty and Human Development', in Rounaq Jahan, ed. *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance* (London: Zed Books, 2000), p. 271.

11 Matiur Rahman and Naeem Hasan, *Iron Bars of Freedom* (London: News and Media Ltd. for Book and Documentation, 1980), pp 71–84.

'man-made famine' of 1974.[12] Thus, an observer argues that Bangladesh's economic problems are due to Sheikh Mujib's failure.[13] Such massive economic problems were supplemented by the corruption of several noted Awami Leaguers, who were generally close to Mujib, and all these culminated into greater disillusionment among the Bangladeshi people towards the Mujib regime.[14]

Under extreme difficulty in handling the grave economic problems and a shrinking support base, Mujib resorted to 'repressive measures' of governance by amending the Constitution 'to make himself the president for 5 years with full executive authority' and later to outlaw all existing political parties except his newly formed Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSHAL).[15] Such authoritarianism of Mujibism is regarded as the 'constitutional coup'[16] of 25 January 1975, when the fourth amendment of the Bangladeshi Constitution replaced the parliamentary system with presidential form of government, multi-party system with totalitarian control and one-party rule, curtailing the powers of the National Parliament, while the Judiciary lost much of its independence as the Supreme Court was deprived of its jurisdiction over the protection and enforcement of fundamental rights.[17]

Such repressive measures with virtually 'one man rule' was accompanied by absolute control of parliament and party, the rule of small coterie of nouveau riche close to Mujib, stifling of political opposition, gagging the press, declaration of emergency as a tool to repress political opponents, abolition of parliamentary democracy and creation of single party system with 'megalomaniac' acts and turning family affairs to almost state events.[18] Mujib's paramilitary force, the Rakhi Bahini, almost acted as a private militia[19] and became well known for its 'intimidation tactics'.[20]

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12 Ibid, pp 84–99. The Bangladesh famine was a result of several geographic and climatic factors like floods, economic factors, socio-structural factors, politico-administrative factors and international factors. See Habibul Haque Khondker, 'The Famine of 1974', in Mohammad Mohabbat Khan and John P. Thorp, ed. *Bangladesh: Society, Politics and Bureaucracy* (Dhaka: Center for Administrative Studies, 1984), pp 43–74; Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp 131–153.

13 Sufia M. Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh: Religion, Ethnicity, and Language in an Islamic Nation* (New Delhi: Vistaar, 2006), p. 122.

14 Ibid, pp 99–102.

15 Ibid, pp 121–122.

16 Talukder Maniruzzaman, 'Bangladesh in 1975: The Fall of the Mujib Regime and its Aftermath', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 2, A Survey of Asia in 1975: Part II (February 1976), pp 119–129.

17 Ibid; Rounaq Jahan, ed. *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance* (London: Zed Books, 2000), p. 25.

18 Rahman and Hasan, *Iron Bars of Freedom*, pp 134–172.

19 Ibid, p. 144.

20 Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh*, p. 122.

No wonder, Mujib shortly became unpopular with grave economic crisis in the country and his repressive tactics to handle the crisis.[21] In fact, the first public protest against Mujib occurred as early as 17 September 1972 just eight months after he became the prime minister of the new Bangladesh republic.[22] The extreme unpopularity of Mujib due to his failure in improving the economic condition of the Bangladeshi *people*, appended by an inefficient administration, authoritarian rule and the corruption of his family and regime[23] was reflected in the fact that after his assassination by a military coup, there was not an influential mass democratic movement to protest such a ghastly act. There was not even a prominent mass democratic upsurge against the successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad until the late 1980s.

Thus, a commentator has argued that the Awami League's attempt to develop a set of principles known as 'Mujibism' (*Mujibbad* in Bangla) by trying to elevate a cult status, much akin to Maoism in China, in fact, failed to capture the imagination of the Bangladeshi people.[24] Since the new power holders of Bangladesh were 'incapable of establishing a more just, equitable and safe society,' under the political project of Mujibism, their proclamations of 'nationalism, secularism, socialism and democracy began to ring hollow'.[25] In other words, Mujibism could not fulfil the promise of Bangladesh liberation with an emancipatory politics and was rather identified by the people as a repressive agency.

From the above accounts, one can argue that the secularization process initiated by the Mujib regime was often imposed from above like banning the religious parties. In the mid of authoritarian imposition from above than a hegemonic formation from below where the consent and participation of the people is necessary for a popular developmental and cultural programme, the limits of Bangladeshi secularists and progressives were exposed to the people that resulted in the dissatisfaction of the people towards the secularist project. The secular–nationalist regime of Mujib took refuge to violent and repressive measures to control and eradicate political opposition and dissent in the mid of economic crises and often lead to what can be called messianic authoritarianism and narcissistic leadership.

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21 Anthony Mascarenhas, *Bangladesh: A Legacy of Blood* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986), pp 19–59.

22 Ibid, p. 19.

23 Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues* (Dhaka: University Press, 1980), pp 131–145.

24 Marcus Franda, *Bangladesh: The First Decade* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1982), p. 156.

25 Willem van Schendel, 'Bengalis, Bangladeshis and Others: Chakma Visions of a Pluralist Bangladesh', in Rounaq Jahan, ed. *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance* (London: Zed Books, 2000), p. 68.

In Bangladesh, the failure of developmental and cultural programmes of the secular–nationalist leadership on the one hand, and authoritarianism on the other, gave the Islamists the chance to vilify the secular-progressives in Bangladesh to identify the miseries of the people as a result of the Western model of nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism. One will later see, how these ideas were identified with the 'conspiracy of the West' and the root causes of the miseries of Bangladesh as propagated by the Islamists. As Ranabir Samaddar points out that 'if *nationalist euphoria and post-independent (post nationalist) misery are locked as binary opposites in the career of nationalism, the old union of ethics and politics is always followed by its break and emergence of an alternative morality to recapture the lost spirit*'[26] (emphasis original). This new 'moral politics' in the shape of Islamism gained popularity 'among those who were disillusioned with the corruption of public life and the exclusion of so many from the new state'.[27]

The discredit of Mujibism can be explained by the sustenance of two successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad, covering one-and-a-half decades without getting significant challenge from a secularist opposition, demanding the restoration of democratic rule until late 1980s. When democratic elections were finally held in 1991, it was not Mujib's party Awami League that won the election, but it was the centre-right BNP, which became the single largest party in the National Parliament and formed the government with the help of Jamaat-e-Islami. Therefore, the failure of 'Mujibism' and the first Awami League government in Bangladesh created conditions for a couple of military coups in the absence of any other democratic opposition to an authoritarian rule. The successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad patronized the Islamists, which is an account that I shall discuss now.

Military patronage to Islamism

The post-liberation economic crisis in Bangladesh contributed to the erosion of legitimacy of the Awami League government as noted earlier. It was followed by a pro-US tilt of the successive military establishments, right from late 1970s and early 1980s that tried to legitimize the Islamic parties.[28] Thus, an important factor that played a crucial role in revitalizing Islam as a political symbol in Bangladesh

[26] Ranabir Samaddar, 'Bangladesh Nationalism: A Thing of the Past?', in Sukha Ranjan Chakravarty, ed. *Society, Polity and Economy of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1994), p. 56.

[27] Schendel, 'Bengalis, Bangladeshis and Others', p. 69.

[28] Khondker, 'US Imperialism and Bengali Nationalism', p. 245.

is the calculated strategy of successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad, which often in their search for political legitimacy on the one hand and in isolating the mainstream political parties like Awami League on the other directly or indirectly prepared the conditions for the rise of Islamism in Bangladesh.[29] The successive military dictatorships under Zia and Ershad made compulsory religious education at schools, patronized madrasa education, besides encouraging religious leaders to play active role in politics of the country.[30]

After Sheikh Mujib's brutal assassination by a military coup, and General Zia-ur-Rahman's subsequent alteration of the secular fabric of Bangladesh by calling off the ban on religious parties, the Jamaat concentrated in building its organization.[31] By assuming the President's office on 21 April 1977, Zia amended the Constitution by 'promulgating a Proclamation Order', the very next day – adding *Bismillahir Rahmanur Rahim* (In the name of Allah) at the outset of the Constitution, while 'the words "liberation struggle" in the preamble were replaced by "war of independence", "secularism" in the fundamental principles of state policy was replaced by "total faith and belief in the Almighty Allah", socialism was explained as "economic and social justice"'.[32] A new clause was added to Article 25 'to the effect that the state shall endeavour to strengthen, consolidate and preserve the fraternal relationship between the Muslim states on the basis of Islamic solidarity'.[33] This Islamization of Bangladesh Constitution was done under Zia's martial law when there was limited scope to protest against government measures.[34] It was during Zia's time that the Jamaat leader Ghulam Azam, 'who had gained notoriety for collaborating with the Pakistani military regime during 1971 war and was subsequently accused as a war criminal, was allowed to return to Bangladesh'.[35]

After the assassination of Zia in 1981, General Hussain Muhammad Ershad seized power in 1982 in a bloodless coup. In late 1980s, he faced stiff opposition from a mass movement demanding restoration of democracy. The anti-Ershad

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29 Enayetur Rahim, 'Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Jama't-i-Islami in Bangladesh', in Rafiuddin Ahmed, ed. *Understanding the Bengal Muslims: Interpretative Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 255.

30 Ibid.

31 Lifschultz, *Bangladesh*, pp 98–103; Mascarenhas, *Bangladesh*, pp 60–77.

32 Anisuzzaman, 'Religion and Politics in Bangladesh', p. 44.

33 Ibid.

34 M. Anisuzzaman, 'The Identity Question and Politics', in Rounaq Jahan, ed. *Bangladesh: Promise and Performance* (London: Zed Books, 2000), pp 62-63.

35 A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, 'Nationalism and Democracy on Trial: The Bangladesh Scenario', in Sukha Ranjan Chakravarty, ed. *Society, Polity and Economy of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1994), p. 105.

movement was simultaneously organized and supported by the Awami League-led eight parties, the BNP-led seven parties and an amalgamation of five small left-oriented parties and the Jamaat-e-Islami.[36] Following such a political challenge from the opposition in 1988, when the BNP was taking credit of 'having brought Islam back to Bangladesh' and the Jamaat promoting an agenda of 'an ideal Islamic state in future', Ershad put forward the Eighth Constitutional amendment passed by the parliament declaring 'Islam as the State religion of Bangladesh'.[37] A commentator has argued that 'the failure to organize any effective movement against the passing of the state Religion Bill on the part of the mainstream opposition forces only demonstrated their fragile commitment to upholding secularism which was one of the state principles enshrined in the Constitution of 1972'.[38] It was a peculiar political situation as it was unclear whether the Muslim majority in Bangladesh actually wanted Islam to be the state religion. Surely, there were no strong demand for state religion bill with massive mobilizations hitting the streets; neither had it openly opposed Islam as a state religion in similar fashion. In the mid of such circumstances, the 'secular-minded politicians and professionals appeared to be helpless and seemed to be shy in this delicate issue'.[39] Similarly, in the late 1980s, the Jamaat was accommodated by the secularist political parties including the Awami League during the Anti-Ershad agitations after '10 elected members of the Jamaat-i-Islami first tendered their resignation on December 5 1987', following which Ershad himself dissolved the National Parliament, the next day.[40]

The successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s only helped the Jamaat to grow politically and organizationally, since both used the Jamaat to consolidate a support base for their respective military regimes.[41] Both Zia's BNP and Ershad's Jatiyo Party

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36 Anisuzzaman, 'Religion and Politics in Bangladesh', pp 44–45.

37 Ibid, p. 45.

38 Rangalal Sen, 'The Movement for Restoration of Democracy in Bangladesh 1982–1990: A Theoretical Framework and Social Background', in Sukha Ranjan Chakravarty, ed. *Society, Polity and Economy of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1994), p. 84.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid, p. 83.

41 For a detailed assessment of military regimes under Zia and Ershad, see Habib Zafarullah, ed. *The Zia Episode in Bangladesh Politics* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1996); Bhuian Md. Monoar Kabir, *Politics of Military Rule and the Dilemmas of Democratization in Bangladesh* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1999); Lawrence Ziring, *Bangladesh, from Mujib to Ershad: An Interpretive Study* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1992); S. R. Chakravarty, *Bangladesh under Mujib, Zia, and Ershad: Dilemma of a New Nation* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1995).

(JP) opted for a balancing act of 'Bangladeshi nationalism' (characterized by majoritarianism and giving legitimacy to Islamic religion and religious parties in politics) that was distinct from the erstwhile Awami League's assertion for 'Bengali nationalism'.[42] The re-emergence, prominence and legitimization of Jamaat in national political scene of Bangladesh also affected the political strategy of secular political parties like Awami League in using 'Islamic religious symbols, emblems, and even rituals to recreate its own image in the Islamic mould'.[43]

In this regard, Jamaat too used these opportunities to grow further in Bangladesh so that it could influence the politics of the country in future. Eventually, Jamaat became an important political player in Bangladesh while becoming the fourth largest party in Bangladesh and even supported the Khaleda Zia led BNP government in 1991 and 2001 with 18 and 17 seats, respectively, in the 300 seats Bangladeshi Parliament. Thus, the above accounts show that the story of Islamism in Bangladesh is linked to the transformation of illegitimacy of religious parties and their role in politics in the Mujib regime to the legitimizing processes of the same in the successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad. This re-legitimating process of the religious parties under military regimes culminated to the prominence of an Islamist party like Jamaat in the national political scene of Bangladesh.

Failure of the Bangladeshi left

Apart from the military patronage to Islamism, another account talks about the failure of the Left movement in Bangladesh that created possible conditions for Islamism to grow in the country. The Left in Bangladesh has been historically weak with the migration of a big section of its leadership to West Bengal after the 1947 partition followed by state repression on the Leftwing forces in both East Pakistan and early days of independent Bangladesh under Mujib.[44] In this respect, the historic parallel of the rise of Islamism in Bangladesh is with Egypt where Nasserism violently suppressed both the liberal democratic pole and the communist popular pole, which created a void that facilitated Islamism to emerge as a political opposition to Nasserite regime.[45]

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42 Schendel, 'Bengalis, Bangladeshis and Others', p. 71.

43 Rahim, 'Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 255.

44 Serajul Islam Choudhury, 'The Left Movement: An Overview', in Abul Kalam, ed. *Bangladesh in the New Millennium: A University of Dhaka Study* (Dhaka: University Press, 2004), pp 127–135.

45 Amin, *Eurocentrsim*, p. 73.

Moreover, the Left movement in Bangladesh was crippled with factionalism of middle-class leadership, which could not speak the language of the masses to become a popular party[46] and external dependence on either Moscow or Peking for ideological, strategic and tactical guidance.[47] In such a scenario, the Left movement in Bangladesh with its overtly middle-class character only remained as a mere middle-class intellectual vision with complete disconnect from the vast majority of the people.[48] In such conditions, the disillusionment of the Bangladeshi people with the existing political class represented by Awami League, BNP, JP and the minutely fragmented and marginalized Bangladeshi Left gave a scope to the Islamist politics of Jamaat that could promise an alternative Islamic order free from the evils and corruption of ruling political classes in Bangladesh.

Political economy factors

Besides the above-mentioned accounts, existing literature also shows that there are also political economy factors behind the rise of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh. As one commentator argues that Islamism generally became popular in the 1980s and 1990s not only among a section of middle peasants and a squeezed urban middle class, but also among the disgruntled children of the state elite 'who were looking for an ideological alternative to the discredited nationalism of their elders and who sought to establish new links with "the people"'.[49]

Similarly, external pressures from oil-rich Islamic countries that have been funding Bangladesh over the years in various forms of aid and financial grants also significantly helped to revitalize Islamic symbols in Bangladeshi politics.[50] Furthermore, the ideologically motivated, literate and dedicated cadre-based organizational strength, strong networks of Jamaat among various sections of the population and attempts for mass dissemination and circulation of its party literature also contributed to the rebuilding procedures of Islamism in Bangladesh.[51] Finally, international events like the Islamic revolt of Iran in 1979 and the success of Taliban regime in capturing political power in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s also rekindled Islamist politics in Bangladesh

[46] Choudhury, 'The Left Movement', pp 127–135; Badruddin Umar, *Bangladeshe Communist Andolaner Shamashya* (Problems of Communist Movement in Bangladesh) 1975, New edition (Dhaka: Jatiya Grantha Prokashan, 1997).

[47] Choudhury, 'The Left Movement'; Lifschultz, *Bangladesh*, pp 21–26.

[48] Choudhury, 'The Left Movement'.

[49] Schendel, 'Bengalis, Bangladeshis and Others', pp 69–70.

[50] Rahim, 'Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism', pp 255–256.

[51] Ibid.

because these international events only reminded Islamist parties like Jamaat about the revolutionary potential of Islam in the contemporary world.[52]

But do all these accounts *theoretically* explain the prominence of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh? In the next subsection, I will precisely try to do such an exercise.

Explaining the prominence of Islamism in Bangladesh

From the above literature, one can argue that the prominence of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh was due to the unfulfilment of the democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people by the non-Islamist power bloc. Since the democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people were fulfilled by neither the secular political leadership nor the military rule; the alternative political discourse that could promise a better political order is none but the Islamists in a Muslim country, where any other credible alternative political discourse was absent.

In this regard, it must be noted that the prominence of Islamism with the emergence of Jamaat as a key player in Bangladeshi politics is linked to the availability of Islam as a credible political discourse among a *section* of Muslims in Bangladesh. The favourable conditions for the eventual rise of Islamist politics in future were *available* in Bangladesh right from the *Faraizi* movement to the partition and post-partition debates marked by the rhetoric of religious nationalism in East Pakistan. Islam was articulated as a political discourse in nineteenth century *Faraizi* movement in Bengal led by Haji Shariatullah and later on by his son Mohammad Mohsin, popularly known as Dudu Mia.[53] The *Faraizi* movement was able to mobilize fresh converts from the downtrodden sections of local Bengali population and significant sections of Muslim peasants.[54] The political approach of *Faraizi* movement in opposition to British Raj, the Hindu–Bengali-landed gentry and the small section of Muslim elites was later on reformulated as a political voice for plebian sections of Bengali Muslims.[55] This Bengali Muslim politics was later championed by the Islamic revivalism of *Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah* movement by Shahid Titu Mir and Maulana Wilayet Ali, the *Ahl-i-Hadith* movement of Mawlana Inayat Ali, the *Taaiyuni* movement

52 Ibid, pp 256–257.

53 Zillur Rahman Khan, 'Islam and Bengali Natonalism', in Rafiuddin Ahmed, ed. *Bangladesh: Society, Religion and Politics* (Chittagong: South Asia Studies Group, 1985), p. 19.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid, pp 19–21.

of Maulana Karamat Ali and local Muslim *Mullahs* and *Fakirs* throughout the nineteenth century Bengal.[56] In fact, there were trends of traditional Sufi movements in Bengal right from the thirteenth century[57] and a more aggressive religious movement from the nineteenth century which although had internal differences with each other, nonetheless made Islamic religion as an available discourse in the social life of Bengali Muslims.[58] The second half of nineteenth-century Bengal witnessed the political articulation of 'Muslim conservatism' by Nawab Abdul Latif (1828–1893).[59] Later on, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Islamic reformism, which was an attempt to engage with European liberalism and rationality, without an atheistic denouncement of Islamic religion, was propagated by Syed Ameer Ali (1848–1928).[60] The Bengali Muslim politics was later carried forward by modern Bengali Muslim leaders like A. K. Fazlul Haq of Barisal, Abul Hashim of Burdwan, Abul Kashem of Chittagong and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy during the first half of the twentieth century, whereas Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the second half of the last century.[61] Most of these political leaders were instrumental in raising Muslim Bengali consciousness against the exploitation by Hindu landlords, the English rulers and subsequently against the West Pakistani industrial entrepreneurial elites.[62] The political articulations of this leadership were often blended with the religious and the political[63] or at best they were soft on religion. The pre-partition Bengal also witnessed a 'politics of Muslim identity (with) an agrarian base'.[64] The Muslim peasantry in fact 'responded to the

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[56] Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengal Muslims*, 1871–1906, *A Quest for Identity* (1981) Second edition (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp 39–105; Muin-ud-din Ahmad Khan, 'The Islamic Reform Movements in Bengal in the Nineteenth Century: Meaning and Significance', in Rafiuddin Ahmed, ed. *Islam in Bangladesh: Society, Culture, and Politics* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Itihas Samiti, 1983), pp 98–111.

[57] Richard M. Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier*, 1204–1760 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[58] See Rafiuddin Ahmed, ed. *Islam in Bangladesh: Society, Culture and Politics* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Itihas Samiti, 1983).

[59] A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, 'Trends in Bengali Muslim Social Thought in the Nineteenth Century', in Rafiuddin Ahmed, ed. *Islam in Bangladesh: Society, Culture, and Politics* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Itihas Samiti, 1983), p. 118.

[60] Ibid; Also see Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*.

[61] Khan, 'Islam and Bengali Natonalism', p. 20.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Partha Chatterjee, *The Present History of West Bengal: Essays in Political Criticism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 30.

appeals of religion' and discovered a 'sense of community' in religion which also 'provided the basis of a "national bond" and became the rallying cry of a "political organization", demanding the creation of a separate Muslim homeland'.[65] Thus, the peasant mobilizations behind theo-political discourses of *Khilafat* movement in 1920s only become part of the later Pakistan movement in 1940s.[66] Therefore, when the Bengali Muslims were presented a choice between India and Pakistan in the 1946 elections, the overwhelming majority voted for Jinnah's Pakistan project as they felt safer with the Muslim League proposal of creating a separate homeland for Muslims.[67] In fact, communal polarization between Hindu and Muslim communities in Bengal started growing from the first half of the last century.[68] Thus, in the first half of the twentieth century, Bengal witnessed a politics organized around either a religious Islamic identity or a community identity and in most cases, the theo-political ascription of Islamic identity and assertively communal Muslim identity were indeed overlapping.[69] Following the 1947 partition, the Pakistani rulers were in fact inspired by 'Islamic ideology'.

As one has learnt from Laclau in the 'Introduction' of the book that mere *availability* of a credible political discourse in moments of a general crisis can lead to the acceptance of a particular order. If the democratic demands of the community are not fulfilled by the secular political formation, then it is no wonder that an Islamist political articulation can be witnessed among a *section* of Muslims in the absence of any other alternative credible political discourse. According to Laclau, the question of 'availability' and 'unavailability' of a credible political discourse is important in gaining its legitimacy within a community. The simultaneous *availability* of an Islamist political articulation and *unavailability* of any other credible alternative political articulation in Bangladesh have resulted in the

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65 Sugata Bose, *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure and Politics*, 1919–1947 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp 231–232.

66 Taj ul-Islam Hashmi, *Pakistan as a Peasant Utopia: The Communalization of Class Politics in East Bengal, 1920-1947* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992).

67 Khan, 'Islam and Bengali Natonalism', p. 21.

68 See Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition*, 1932–1947 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal*, 1905–1947 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991); Badruddin Umar, *Banga-bhanga O Shampradayik Rajniti* (Bengal Partition and Communal Politics) (Calcutta: Chirayata, 1987).

69 See Harun-or-Rashid, *The Foreshadowing of Bangladesh: Bengal Muslim League and Muslim Politics*, 1906–1947 (Dhaka: The University Press, 2003); Leonard A. Gordon, 'Divided Bengal: Problems of Nationalism and Identity in the 1947 Partition', in Mushirul Hasan, ed. *India's Partition: Process, Strategy, and Mobilization* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993); Shila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal*, 1937–1947 (New Delhi: Impex India, 1976).

prominence of an Islamist audience among a section of Muslims in Bangladesh. This is not to argue that the Bangladeshi people wholeheartedly agree with the content of Islamism. Since there was no other alternative political discourse that could challenge the authoritarianism of secular political formation of Mujibism and could promise a better political order, a *section* of Bangladeshi people got mobilized by Islamism in 1980s and 1990s. This mobilization of a *section* of Muslims in Bangladesh was possible because Islam was available as a dominant practicing religion for the majority of Bengali population. Thus, in Laclau's terms, the acceptance of a theo-political discourse of Islamism had some 'credibility' since its proposals did not *clash with the basic principles informing the organization of a group*, in this case, the Muslim majority community in Bangladesh. So, the possibilities of favourable conditions for Islamism as a political ideology to gain popularity among a section of Bangladeshi people by rearticulating the Islamic religion was always open even before the formal creation of Bangladesh.

Therefore, the rise of Islamism through Jamaat politics in the 1990s can be analyzed with the category of 'availability'. Islamism could not articulate its politics due to the suppression of Islamist politics in the first half of the 1970s under Sheikh Mujib's regime. But when the Mujib regime was later on questioned and discredited without an alternative credible political discourse, the conditions of possibilities for the emergence of Islamism in Bangladesh became clear with a new opening in the political field. Thus, Islam as a religion took the shape of an organized ideological articulation in Islamism with the replacement of a secular constitution to the formal acknowledgement of Islam as the state religion during the military regimes from late 1970s to 1980s. This shift of political discourse in Bangladesh from secular Bengali nationalism under Mujibism in the first half of the 1970s towards creating conditions for the rise of Islamism with constitutional provisions in late 1970s and 1980s were only possible because of the crisis of secularist project on the one hand and consistent pressure of the Islamists in their struggle to hegemonize the political field of Bangladesh on the other. In simple terms, the crisis of secularism in the Muslim world including Bangladesh in the 1970s and the simultaneous assertions of Islamism to mobilize people behind its political project of Sharia-based Islamic state only compelled the successive military regimes of Zia and Ershad to make constitutional provisions for the role of religion to play an active part in Bangladeshi politics. In other words, the military regimes took refuge to religious symbols like lifting the ban on Islamist parties, or changing the secular constitution to gain legitimacy among a significant section of Bangladeshi people, who were disillusioned with the secular–nationalist project of Mujibism on the one hand and to contain the Islamists on the other. In Laclau's terms, the military power bloc was actually trying to absorb the 'democratic demand' in a differential manner by such strategies of Islamization.

By such formalistic acceptance and acknowledgement of Islamic religion into the body politic of Bangladesh, the military establishment was able to contain a *popular demand* of challenging the power bloc by the Islamists. However, such strategies soon exposed its limits when greater *equivalence* among the opposition parties was witnessed in anti-Ershad mobilizations demanding democratic elections in the late 1980s as pointed out earlier in this chapter.

Thus, Islamists were able to create an antagonistic frontier not only against the West but also by equating the secular-progressive and liberal Western-bred elites as the 'enemy' of the people with an alternative morality of Islamic symbols and theo-political articulations.

Thus, cumulative factors regarding questions of economic failure and a series of unfulfilled democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people by the secular–nationalist project had resulted into an equivalential popular political articulation manipulated by the military establishment along with the Islamists, which from late 1970s onwards has successfully constructed a political discourse, where the old-national populism of Awami League and its political vision of Bengali nationalism were increasingly transformed from the 'representative of the people' to the 'representative of the power bloc'. Once the national-populism of Awami League was identified with the 'power bloc' and lost its plebeian/underdog character, the 'people' found it difficult to *identify* with the politics of the Awami League representing a power bloc. Moreover, the authoritarian approach of the Awami League also contributed to its politico-electoral erosion in the 1970s and 1980s. It would be rather imprudent to argue that the 'people' in Bangladesh are completely unaware of their interests when they have been participating in historic struggles under Awami League's sustained political mobilization on several issues right from the 1950s onwards and, thus, gained a consciousness that can detect a difference between its self-interests and its 'other' antagonistic one. In this respect, let me first posit the broad politico-ideological discourses in contemporary Bangladesh, where Jamaati Islamism operates as a political player. In this respect, it is important to highlight upon the specific project of Mujibism, which the Islamists identify as *the* antagonistic frontier in Bangladesh.

The Kemalist project of Mujibism

Mujibism in Bangladesh has strong parallels with Kemalism in Turkey albeit with some nuanced differences. Similar to Kemalism as discussed in the 'Introduction', the ideology of 'Mujibism' (*Mujibbad*) had a 'personality cult' status and was grounded upon the four principles of 'nationalism', 'democracy', 'socialism'

and 'secularism', which Mujib claimed to follow.[70] Whether or not Mujib at all followed his four principles is indeed a matter of debate; however, his turn towards authoritarianism without being able to deliver the promise of a prosperous Bangladesh thoroughly discredited even the rhetorical value of Mujibism. Nonetheless, one can find similarities on the emphasis over secular–nationalism in both Kemalism and Mujibism. In this sense, Mujibism can be called a specific variety of Kemalism.

However, scholars have argued that 'the difference between the historical destinies of Kemalism and Mujibism (if there is any, as some claim) should not be overblown'.[71] Both Kemal and Mujib abolished Islam as state religion and banned religious parties. Even then Islam came back to Turkey as a 'moderate form in the post-war era'[72], while in Bangladesh, Islamism as a political ideology emerged as an influential actor in Bangladeshi politics after the assassination of Mujib and the tutelage of Islamism by successive institutionalization of military junta. In this respect, while Kemalism was constructed as a political ideology when the Muslim world was experiencing a rising tide of secularism, Mujibism was trying to mimic that Kemalist experiment when secularism was itself dying around the Muslim world. As a result, the Kemalist project was at least able to sustain its hegemony for a few decades. In contrast, Mujibism soon got discredited after it failed to address the democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people, while losing popular support and taking refuge in authoritarianism.

The Kemalist project in Turkey, which started in the 1920s, as briefly discussed in the 'Introduction' of the book, expanded and consolidated till the 1950s. From the 1960s onwards, it faced an 'organic crisis' or 'crisis of hegemony' in Gramscian sense by challenging discourses as distinct as that of the Marxists and ultra-nationalists in the 1960s and 1970s to the rise of Islamist parties from the 1970s onwards.[73] In the Turkish case, the military interventions in 1971 and 1980 rediscovered Kemalism while adopting Kemalist policies and justifying the Kemalist definition of community as 'secular, rational and modern' to prove the 'rationality of Islam' and, thus, 'orthodox Islam became an ideological means in the hands of the state to regain mass support for the Kemalist regime and to contain the rising tide of Islamism'.[74] The official Kemalism under the military reconciled with Islam by conceiving it as a part of Turkishness and adopted a model of Turkish–Islam synthesis

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70 Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues* (1980), New expanded edition (Dhaka: University Press, 2005), pp 109–110.

71 Samaddar, 'Bangladesh Nationalism', p. 56.

72 Ibid.

73 Çelik, 'The constitution and dissolution of the Kemalist imaginary', pp 193–204.

74 Ibid, pp 199–200.

to sustain an authoritarian regime albeit recognising the 'power of Islam'.[75] Like the Turkish case, Bangladesh also had a similar experience. To gain popular support and contain the Islamists, successive military regimes adopted such an accomodationist strategy of using Islamic symbols in the governmental affairs of the country. But unlike Turkey, the military regimes in Bangladesh were never a strong defender of the Kemalist project of Mujibism. Rather, they tried to accommodate Islam to displace Mujibism from the position of power. In this respect, a break from the secular–nationalist principles of Mujibism to dropping secularism and celebrating Bangladeshi nationalism instead of Bengali nationalism can be witnessed in the politico-ideological discourses of military regimes in Bangladesh. In fact, Islam vs Kemalist anti-Islamism in Turkey[76] is similar with contemporary Bangladesh with a tussle between Mujibism and Islamism.

The erstwhile 'national elite' comprising former freedom fighters, students and intellectuals and their vision of Bengali nationalism got politically challenged by the emergence of successive military regimes, which facilitated Islamism not only to come in the forefront of Bangladesh politics, but also in their quest for power and links with international capital, have manipulated prominent symbols of Bengali nationalism like Language Day (21 February), Independence Day (26 March) and Victory Day (16 December) to a 'false dichotomy' between 'Bengali' and 'Bangladeshi' nationalism.[77] The cherished principle of Bengali nationalism promoted by Awami League was countered by Zia's version of Bangladeshi nationalism by dropping 'secularism' as a constitutional principle, which eventually forced his regime to an excessive reliance on the Islamists.[78] By the late 1980s, during the anti-Ershad agitation for democratic elections, a 'renewal nationalism' was witnessed which 'seeks to recover the liberating potential of nationalism, to maintain the post-colonial, post-communalist vision which empowered the movement for Bangladesh, and to bring the institutions of state and civil society more closely in line with that vision'.[79] This 'renewal nationalism' was not merely a continuation of the 'old oppositional Bengali nationalism of the Pakistan period' but is different from that and 'seeks to redefine Bengali nationalism in opposition to a state elite which claims the same ideology as its *raison d'être*'.[80] Thus, 'renewal nationalism employs symbols of the old nationalism to new ends' while asserting the vision

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid, p. 202.

[77] Schendel, 'Bengalis, Bangladeshis and Others', pp 68–69.

[78] Franda, *Bangladesh*, p. 225.

[79] Schendel, 'Bengalis, Bangladeshis and Others', p. 68.

[80] Ibid.

of 'independent, self-reliant, secular and democratic Bangladesh to discredit the authoritarianism and injustice of the new rulers'.[81]

The repressive policies during the Pakistan era were not abandoned under Mujibism and the replacement of Mujibism was akin to the Pakistani martial law administration during Zia and Ershad regimes until the military order was challenged by the unity of opposition parties demanding democratic elections.[82] However, the political instability that followed after Mujib under the aegis of successive military coups due to inner factionalism of the Bangladesh army[83] also could not resolve the basic livelihood issues of the Bangladeshi people while taking repressive measures. In this respect, one can possibly argue that Mujibism is a 'double mimicry' as it is a mimicry of Kemalism, which is again a mimicry of the West in the form of Eurocentrism in the Muslim world. However, apart from Mujibism, what are the broad politico-ideological discourses in contemporary Bangladesh within which Jamaati Islamism operates? This is a topic of discussion in the next subsection.

Politico-ideological discourses in contemporary Bangladesh

Samir Amin observes that currently three principal political actors opposed to one another are shaping the contemporary political affairs of several Muslim countries. These are the degenerated and corrupt residues of old national–populist regimes, the Islamists and those who propose 'economic liberalism'.[84] I identify the last group as 'neoliberals', who propose to govern their respective countries with market-led neoliberal economic policies. According to Amin, the 'comprador' class interests affiliated with contemporary 'imperialist system' are expressed through these three tendencies in several Muslim countries and the US diplomacy uses their mutual conflicts to its own 'exclusive benefit'.[85] By following Amin's classification, in contemporary Bangladesh also, one can identify these three distinct political actors. The Awami League in Bangladesh is certainly an old-national populist party with some corrupt elements, whereas Jamaat-e-Islami and other Islamist groups in Bangladesh are all various shades of Islamists, and successive military regimes and BNP are political elements favouring 'economic liberalism'.

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81 Ibid, pp 68–69.

82 Franda, *Bangladesh*, pp 107–215.

83 Habiba Zaman, 'The Military in Bangladesh Politics', in Mohammad Mohabbat Khan and John P. Thorp, ed. *Bangladesh: Society, Politics & Bureaucracy* (Dhaka: Center for Administrative Studies, 1984), pp 88–102.

84 Amin, 'Political Islam in the Service of Imperialism', p. 19.

85 Ibid.

While locating the genealogical debate on the rise of Islamism, as discussed in the 'Introduction' of this book, I have discussed the theories commenting upon the complex relationship between the assertion of imperialism, the limits of Kemalism and the rise of Islamism. Besides Amin's book and the existing theories of explaining Islamism as discussed in the 'Introduction', I must elaborate on the major politico-ideological discourses in contemporary Bangladesh in relation to the politics of exclusion/inclusion that structures the political context under which Islamism operates and articulates its politics. The question of exclusion/inclusion is also important because all the notable political trends in Bangladesh either justify their political action of opposing the power bloc with regard to *exclusion* from the power bloc or seeking *inclusion* in the power bloc. In Bangladesh, this power bloc as an antagonistic frontier of a challenging political formation is generally regarded as the local state itself or in the form of 'imperialism' during moments, when a close liaison between the Bangladeshi state and such foreign powers are made issues in Bangladeshi politics.

The politics of *inclusion* and *exclusion* with respect to Bangladeshi politics has its own peculiarities. Theoretically, one can argue that the *politics of exclusion* is to assert the voice of the excluded, articulate and struggle for the interests of the *excluded* within the ambit of power bloc, to sit in the negotiating table, to get more empowerment while seeking *inclusion* in the power bloc. Thus, *politics of exclusion* can be seen as *politics of inclusion* as well. However, the problem of *inclusion* may be compared with the problem of co-option, appropriation and collaboration while having negotiations with the power bloc. In this respect, *politics of exclusion* might offer three possible politico-ideological positions. In the first place, *politics of exclusion* may have its own aspirations for entry into the power bloc with an agenda of discrimination, deprivation and exclusion. That is to say, this kind of position has an inclusive reformist agenda for its own constituency without having an agenda of radical transformation of the existing socio-economic structures and without altering the existing power relationships. So, the first position can be of a direct *collaborationist*, a position of sell-off to the dominant power elite representing the interests of the local ruling classes and the imperialist system. The successive military regimes and two major parties in Bangladesh – Awami League and BNP, while implementing the neoliberal consensus in the country during their respective regimes and sometimes formulating economic, trade and bilateral policies serving the interests of foreign countries – can be seen as examples of the first position.

The second position may be to celebrate the situation of *exclusion* itself while sitting on the *margins* and then attack the power bloc from *outside* but without having a radical agenda of social transformation. This position has its very own vested interests by keeping alive the problems of deprivation, inequality, discrimination and exclusion as without these issues, it cannot offer its constituency

and its representatives a sense of empowerment and recognition with its own politics of opposition to the power bloc. This position can be identified with the position of *safety valve* in maintaining the neoliberal *status quo* because it often negotiates with the power bloc and serves its interests if the power bloc gives it a suitable deal, otherwise it prefers to oppose the power bloc. This politico-ideological position can be also called a *politics of altered status quo* that vacillates between collaboration and opposition to the power bloc. This politico-ideological position of altered status quo in the Bangladeshi context is often marked by a peculiar politics, flavoured with theo-political discourses of Islamism. This theo-political discourse of Islamism rhetorically claims to provide an 'alternative' to both capitalism and socialism with an 'Islamic state', despite the fact that the foundation of an Islamic state is based on private property and re-inscribes much of modern capitalist framework. *Jamaat-e-Islami* and other Islamist groups in Bangladesh represent such a politics of altered *status quo*.

Finally, there can be a third politico-ideological position which represents the politics of *social transformation* to change the structures of the existing power bloc with an alternative to neoliberal capitalism. This position has a progressive agenda to include the 'excluded' in its own terms by providing a counter hegemony while replacing and displacing the dominant capitalist socio-economic system and the power structures that sustain it. Here, the excluded want to include themselves in the power structures of society by occupying the seats of power, not in terms and conditions of the hegemon like a collaborationist. Neither does it vacillate between opposition and collaboration like the second position, but it seeks to capture political power in its own terms, by providing counter-hegemony. It is an autonomous political space in waging a struggle of resistance against the power bloc without yielding to its strategic mechanisms of co-option/appropriation. A committed and progressive Leftwing movement in Bangladesh with its emphasis on anti-capitalism and anti-ruling class politics can occupy this third position.

In an overall analysis, the aforementioned three broad politico-ideological positions are not static but can replace one another in the course of a competitive struggle for hegemony. These three politico-ideological positions have their autonomous space in different moments and contexts of bargaining, negotiations and contestations with each other. Islamism in Bangladesh operates and articulates its politics in a political environment constituting these three different politico-ideological positions. Thus, Awami League, BNP and military regimes in Bangladesh can be identified as *collaborating* with the Washington consensus of neoliberalism, while the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh *vacillates* between cooperation and opposition to neoliberalism, and the Leftwing politics is currently too weak in Bangladesh to give an alternative to neoliberal capitalism.

There is no denying the fact that the post-Mujib military regime's identification

with Islamic values and symbols 'to legitimize their rule' followed by mobilization of a section of Bangladeshi Muslims for an Islamic alternative to 'Bengali nationalism' and the simultaneous emergence of Jamaat as a an important player in national politics 'resulted in a sharp polarization between Islamic and secular forces'.[86] In the following subsection and the next chapter, I shall discuss this polarity of political forces in Bangladesh and the interventions of Jamaat in creating and maintaining such chasm with a new political language of Islamism and how it identifies and prioritizes secularism as an antagonistic frontier than any other politico-ideological discourse.

An important question to ask here is why Islamism emerges as a third political force in Bangladesh when competing political discourses of Kemalist politics of Mujibism with secular 'Bengali nationalism' and a less secular 'Bangladeshi nationalism'[87] under the auspices of military regimes were already available? Secondly, how does Jamaat emerge as an important political player in Bangladesh among several Islamist forces? One can address these questions in terms of the limits of existing political discourses of both 'Bengali nationalism' of Awami League and the 'Bangladeshi nationalism' of BNP and JP in the mid of a credible alternative, say genuine Leftwing politics as a protest discourse against the hegemonic political formations in Bangladesh.

However, one cannot just explain the emergence of Jamaati Islamism with a negative logic of *unavailability* of a certain kind of political discourse. To become politically prominent in Bangladesh from the shadow of statist ban and a stigmatized past of collaborating with anti-Bangladesh forces, Jamaati Islamism has to offer something positive/better than the existing political discourses. So what are those promises of Islamic alternative and what are its major allegations against the existing political discourses that it treats them as antagonistic frontiers? This is a topic that I will discuss in the next subsection.

Interventions of Bangladesh Jamaat: Constructing antagonistic frontiers and politics of 'Islamic alternative'

As Jamaat was formed in the pre-partition period, Jamaat's intervention in partition and post-partition debates is surely not to be overlooked. Since the contemporary politico-ideological discourses in Bangladesh are linked with its historic past and even now intensely debated, unlike India (where the contemporary politico-ideological discourses hardly focus upon the role of any given political party in

[86] Taj ul-Islam Hashmi, 'Islam in Bangladesh Politics', in Hussain Mutalib and Taj ul-Islam Hashmi, ed. *Islam, Muslims and the Modern State* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 100.

[87] Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh*, pp 117–153.

the national movement for instance), a discussion on the contemporary politico-ideological articulations of Jamaat can be comprehensively understood by analyzing Jamaat's past in Bangladesh.

The antagonism of contemporary Bangladeshi politics between secularism and Islamism is not new. In fact, the tensions between religious and modern/Western secular discourses among the middle-class Muslim intelligentsia in Bengal had at least a century long history.[88] Just after the 1947 partition, the Muslim League government resorted to a theo-political rhetoric and the meaning of the Pakistani state came closer to the concept of 'Islamic state' to unify the 'people' and the 'nation' in the wake of communist inspired peasant rebellions of late 1940s and early 1950s.[89] Furthermore, the Muslim League government also identified 'communists' with 'Hindus' although 'the ploy did not work as much of the opposition to the government arose among the Muslims themselves'.[90] Following the Muslim League regime, Yahya Khan's military regime 'tried to introduce religious education into the general education system and greatly undermined the status of Bengali as a medium of instruction'.[91] While this education policy was rejected by three main student organizations of East Pakistan – the Students' League and the pro-Peking and pro-Moscow factions of the Students' Union – the Jamaat backed Islami Chhatra Shangha 'extended its full support to the military government's education policy'.[92]

In the partition debates, Maududi – the founder of Jamaat – differed from both the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan and the pro-Congress Muslim *ulema* (religious scholars), who accepted the Indian version of nationalism.[93] Maududi and his Jamaat-e-Islami opposed the Muslim League's campaign for Pakistan because Jamaat believed that Pakistan would not be an 'Islamic state'.[94] Maududi's proposed settlement for the Hindu–Muslim problem lay in the logic of an undivided India because for him the creation of Pakistan

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88 On this issue see Tazeen M. Murshid, *The Sacred and the Secular: Bengal Muslim Discourses, 1871–1977* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1995).

89 A. H. Ahmed Kamal, 'Peasant Rebellions and the Muslim League Government in East Bengal, 1947–54', in Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rochona Majumdar, Andrew Sartori, eds. *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan in Transition* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp 201–220.

90 Ibid, p. 217.

91 Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh*, Vol. 2, p. 209.

92 Ibid.

93 Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam Since 1850* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp 454–455; John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, Third edition (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991), pp 89–91.

94 Robinson, *Islam, South Asia, and the West*, p. 118.

would substantially weaken the position of those Indian Muslims who would stay in the Muslim minority provinces.[95] Maududi differentiated between the concept of a 'Muslim identity' and an 'Islamic identity'. A Muslim can be just born in a Muslim family without following the religio-political principles of Islam, whereas a 'true Muslim' is a person who bears an Islamic identity by practicing and believing Islam as a complete way of life and with a goal of establishing the sovereignty of God on earth.[96] Therefore, for Maududi, 'being a Muslim was not an inborn characteristic but a state attained by striving for Islamic knowledge'.[97] That is to say, Maududi believed in the concept of a 'puritan' or 'true Muslim'. As Jalal points out that the Jamaat's opposition to League's Pakistan was because Maududi turned 'cultural difference into an extreme form of bigotry' by which he 'execrated Jinnah and the Muslim League and practically excluded the majority of Muslims from his definition of the true community of Islam'.[98]

Maududi believed in a homogenous concept of a nation based on Islamic faith and practice and, thus, according to him, there can be only two kinds of nations, Islamic and un-Islamic.[99] Maududi believed that the 'composite nationalism' proposed by the Congress and supported by a significant section of Indian ulema would lead to 'absorption of Muslims in the Hindu nation'.[100] Similarly, he had been opposing the Muslim League's two nation theory in the partition debates of 1940s on the following grounds: (a) that the terms 'Muslim' and 'nationalism' were 'contradictory', (b) that 'the top leaders of the Muslim League did not deserve to be the leaders of Muslims' since they lack an 'Islamic mentality' and (c) Pakistan should not be just a Muslim majority state but an 'Islamic state' where 'the system of government will be based on the sovereignty of God'.[101] Historically, the Jamaat had little support in Bengal even before independence and its campaign for Islamic Constitution did not make much headway in East Pakistan to organizationally grow till mid-1950s.[102]

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[95] Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, p. 455.

[96] Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*.

[97] Ayesha Jalal, *Partisans of Allah: Jihad in South Asia* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 253.

[98] Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*, pp 455–456.

[99] Maududi, *Nationalism and India*; Maududi, *Nations: Rise and Fall Why?* Maududi, *The Sick Nations of the Modern Age*.

[100] Kalim Bahadur, 'The Emergence of Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh', in Sukha Ranjan Chakravarty, ed. *Society, Polity and Economy of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1994), p. 30.

[101] Ibid, pp 29–31.

[102] Ibid, pp 32–34.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Jamaat programme made no mention of the important political issues of East Pakistan, namely 'regional autonomy' and 'language movement', articulated by the Bengali middle-class leadership which was disenchanted by the Punjabi–Muhajir combined West Pakistani dominated ruling elite, under whom economic disparities between the East and West Pakistan were growing and the 'suppression of the Bengali aspirations' were taking place.[103] The Jamaat was looking at East Pakistan's alienation and problems through the eyes of Maududi's Islamic ideology with virtually no sympathy for the demands of East Pakistan.[104] As early as 1952, Maududi's journal *Tarjuman al Quran* was against recognizing Bengali as a national language for it claimed that accepting Bengali as a national language would make Bengalis never learn Urdu and would make East Bengal Muslims 'to remain ignorant of Islam' and, thus, 'keep them away from West Pakistan and close to Hindus'.[105]

Following the defeat of an unpopular Muslim League to the United Front in the provincial election of 1954, Maududi himself visited East Pakistan in 1955–56 and in a detailed speech, he changed his earlier position by conceding that Bengalis had some 'genuine grievances' and demanded for making Bengali the national language along with Urdu without delay.[106] He also suggested that Bengalis should be given jobs in government services and also pointed to the general neglect of the socio-economic problems like frequent food shortage, repeated natural calamities and lack of effective relief measures by those in power in West Pakistan.[107] In the same speech, he also argued how the 'unholy alliance' of the 'Communists' and the 'Hindus' were behind the Bengali nationalist movement and trying to take political mileage out of the crisis in East Pakistan.[108] However, he also argued in favour of learning Urdu as according to him 'it was the only source that could have access to Islamic literature'.[109] However, by 1956, the Jamaat condemned the East Pakistani decision to opt for a joint electorate system under the 1956 Constitution on the ground that it was against the very concept of Pakistani nationhood and would facilitate the champions of Bengali nationalism to capture power.[110] Thus, trying to impose an assertive Urdu superiority over Bengali language, right from 1950s, the Jamaat was constructing antagonistic frontiers against Bengali nationalists,

[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid, p. 34.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid, p. 35.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid, pp 35–36.

Communists and Hindu minorities. In fact, according to a Press release of Amnesty International, dated 6 March 2013, the Hindu minorities have been facing a series of violent attacks from the Jamaat. Badruddin Umar informs us that the Jamaat was also making consistent political attacks on the nationalist leader, Maulana Bhasani, while denouncing his political activities as 'un-Islamic'[111] and labelled him as a '*kafir*' (infidel).[112]

Hence, Maududi declared that the Awami League wants to 'split Pakistan'[113] and, hence, Sheikh Mujib's call for provincial autonomy for East Pakistan (pre-independent Bangladesh) was rejected by Jamaat as 'a separatist design'.[114] After the 1970 general elections, Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won 83 seats out of 138 seats in West Pakistan, while Mujib's Awami League won 160 seats out of 162 seats.[115] In such a situation, Bhutto proposed a formula for 'the transfer of power' to 'two majority parties of East and West Pakistan', which Jamaat opposed along with a number of Muslim League factions on the ground that 'transferring power to PPP in West and to the Awami League in East Pakistan meant the disintegration of Pakistan'.[116] Jamaat was convinced that Bhutto's PPP was a frontal organization of the Marxists and its anti-socialism campaign during 1968–1970 was by far the most important event in its recent history.[117] It is interesting to note here that the same Jamaat, which gave the slogan '*Sochializm Kufr Hai!*'(Socialism Is Disbelief) during 1968–1970[118] incorporated 'Islamic socialism', a socialism based on Islamic principles in its 1970 election manifesto.[119] On 8 February 1970, an Islamic conference was held in Dhaka, in which Ghulam Azam (the then Jamaat leader in East Pakistan and later became the leader of Bangladesh Jamaat) and Nezam-i-Islami leader Farid Ahmad denounced both secular Bengali nationalism and socialism.[120] Later, Ghulam Azam in a press conference held in Dhaka on 31 May 1970 said that 'Bengali nationalism' poses 'a great threat to the integrity and solidarity of Pakistan'.[121]

A series of Pakistan military's repression in the 1950s and 1960s only reached its zenith after the March 1971 mass massacres.[122] The secular principles of

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111 Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh*, Vol. 2, p. 238.
112 Ibid, p. 240.
113 Bahadur, 'The Emergence of Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh', p. 36.
114 Rahim, 'Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 243.
115 Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh*, Vol. 2, pp 272–273.
116 Ibid, pp 298–299.
117 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 474
118 Ibid, pp 474–475.
119 Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh*, Vol. 2, p. 231.
120 Ibid, p. 232.
121 Ibid.
122 Anthony Mascarenhas, *The Rape of Bangladesh* (Delhi: Vikas, 1971).

Awami League's mobilizational strategy around Bengali nationalism came in sharp antagonistic contradiction with Jamaat's strategy of asserting Islamic identity, which still shapes up the ideological debates between these two parties even in contemporary Bangladesh. There is little doubt about the historical fact that Jamaat collaborated with the Pakistan army.[123] In fact, to counter the guerilla activity of liberation movement of the Bangladesh freedom fighters (*Mukti Bahini*), it even created 'several impromptu counter-insurgency armed groups, notably, the al-Badr, the al-Shams and the Razakars, who were trained and equipped with weapons by the Pakistan army to fight against the Bengali nationalists'.[124] The Jamaat leader, Maududi 'justified the military action in East Pakistan claiming that no country could allow secessionist activities in any part of its territory' and that East Pakistani Muslims should 'destroy the flag bearers of Bangladesh freedom movement because this movement was sponsored by Hindus, Communists and atheist Bengali nationalists'.[125]

Although there are stark differences between anti-colonial nationalism and Islamic political radicalism on the issue of secularism as a political ideal, one cannot simply deny the commonalities between them as an opposition to Western colonial dominance in the Muslim world.[126] But it is interesting to note that in a post-colonial political scenario, both the Islamists and the nationalists that once opposed colonialism would fight each other when colonialism officially exited from the erstwhile colonies. In fact, for the Islamists, the real threat was not the Western power but the political culture of secularism that came with the West.[127] The ideology of Islamism poses the Western civilization and more importantly the secular modernist elites in Muslim societies as real enemies.[128] In the case of Bangladesh, Islamist parties like Jamaat-e-Islami came in sharp contradiction with secular parties like Awami League and the Left.

In countering Awami League, Jamaat renewed its 'oft-repeated propaganda campaign, arguing that Bengali ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities should be subsumed by Islamic identity alone, and it also urged its student wing to cleanse the college campuses of leftist influences'.[129] The peculiar ideological cement of Islamism within Jamaat in Bangladesh often led to the targeting and

[123] Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 168; Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, New expanded edition, p. 74.

[124] Rahim, 'Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 245.

[125] Bahadur, 'The Emergence of Jamaat-i-Islami in Bangladesh', p. 36.

[126] Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, p. 196.

[127] Robinson, *Islam, South Asia, and the West*, p. 118.

[128] Ibid, p. 200.

[129] Rahim, 'Bengali Muslims and Islamic Fundamentalism', p. 243.

conflicting with secular parties by promoting political violence through its student wings like Islami Chatro Shibir (ICS) with core recruitment from the hopeless, frustrated youth and students in an era of rising unemployment while renewing societal intolerance towards non-Muslims and women.[130] In fact, ICS 'is well known for its intimidation tactics and has been implicated in a number of violent attacks, murders and incidents of torture' though the Bangladesh Jamaat 'publicly denounces the use of coercion and violence'.[131] The antagonism of Bangladesh Jamaat is restricted not only to secular political parties and 'un-Islamic women' but also towards Ahmadiyas or Qadiyanis, which according to Jamaat are non-Muslims. As early as 1953, Jamaat founder Maududi 'instigated a widespread communal riot against the Qadiyanis and killed thousands of them' which forced the Pakistan administration to employ armed forces 'to control the situation'.[132]

It is not the Islamists who identify the secularists as a political enemy, but a process of mutual 'Othering' also takes place in the secular nationalist narrative. In the Bengali nationalist narrative, Islamism is frequently portrayed as 'medieval', 'antiquated', 'fascist', 'reactionary' or 'incompatible with Bengali culture', rather than understanding it 'as a radical and new critique of contemporary conservative nationalism in Bangladesh and the political practices that go under its cover'.[133] Thus, it has been argued by a commentator that Islamism 'is rooted locally, in the accumulation practices and ideological justifications of elite which has ensconced itself in an overcentralized state, but attacks these from the high moral ground of transnational Islam'.[134] In such a situation, it might be 'preponderantly right-wing, intolerant, anti-democratic and prone to violence, but in that it differs only in degree from dominant forms of establishment nationalism' and 'to many Bangladeshis, its appeal lies exactly in its looking beyond a discredited "nation" for moral inspiration'.[135] Therefore, one can see that Islamism only becomes a counter-discourse to Bengali nationalism with an alternative vision of organizing the people. Although both the Jamaat and ICS have recently backed away from their original position on independence of Bangladesh, their members 'are noticeably absent at major secular and national celebrations' and at smaller gatherings, they are often seen to 'disrupt' the secular cultural activities.[136] In fact, many Islamists in

[130] Ibid, pp 250–256.

[131] Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh*, p. 171.

[132] Badruddin Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh, (Vol. 1): Class Struggles in East Pakistan (1947–1958)* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 242.

[133] Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh*, p. 97.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid, p. 171.

Bangladesh are opposed to the celebration of secular holidays and the establishment of monuments associated with those national holidays.[137]

The Islamist politics of Jamaat not only contest secularism but it also questions and critiques the traditional worldview of rural Muslims dominated by spiritualism of *pirs* (pious religious figure/leader), the worship of *dargah* (shrines of religious/spiritual figures) and the reformist agenda of NGOs whose main concerns are not to present Islam as a 'complete way of life' with the goal of establishing an Islamic order as Jamaat professes. Since Bangladesh is seen as a classic case of syncretistic tradition with conflicts within the Muslim community, the Islamic orthodoxy continues 'to operate in tension with other aspects of the world-view of the people'.[138]

From the literature discussed above, the following things can be said. Firstly, Jamaati Islamism has a history of constructing antagonistic frontiers against the secular–nationalists, communists and the Sufi spiritualists. Secondly, I have also discussed the position of Jamaat in historical debates like that of partition in the 1940s, the Bengali language movement in the 1950s and 1960s, and the national liberation movement of Bangladesh in early 1970s to support the agenda of united Pakistan and opposing the independence movement of Bangladesh to emerge as a separate nation-state from Pakistan. This particular position of Jamaat, as one can argue, is a result of its allegiance and loyalty towards the Universalist identity of 'Islamic *ummah*' (community of Muslim believers) rather than any particularist regional or linguistic identity.

The positions of Jamaat intellectuals vis-à-vis India is at best ambivalent without a strong notion of antagonism that was seen in the past in the official position of Jamaat as a political party. Professor A. T. M. Fazlul Haque of Dhaka University Geology Department and a Jamaat intellectual in a field interview point out that 'there are real aspirations of Bangladeshi people from India. We want true friendship from India, which was missing from the Indian side. India always acted as a big brother, exploiting our economy with their manufactured goods, which we are just acting as a consumer market. Moreover, in matters of water resources, India has not cooperated with us kindly. There were anti-Indian sentiments among a section of Bangladeshi people just after the liberation war and those anti-Indian sentiments have now grown over the years in the country'.[139] This is an important statement since it articulates the grievances of a section of Jamaat vis-à-vis Indian political establishment. Similar response was articulated by another

[137] Ibid.

[138] David Abecassis, *Identity, Islam and Human Development in Rural Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1990), p. 42.

[139] Field Interview with A. T. M. Fazlul Haque on 2 June 2009.

Jamaat intellectual, Professor Choudhury Mahmood Hasan of Dhaka University. He argues that both Jamaat and BNP are 'cold towards India, but not anti-Indian, whereas Awami is pro-Indian'. He further argues that it is in this context that 'both Awami and Indian establishment are hostile to Jamaat'. He confesses that 'Jamaat supported united Pakistan and that is still an issue for the opposition'. At the same time, he also clarifies that the 'Jamaat showed allegiance to Bangladesh after the nation is created'. He further clarifies that 'Jamaat was only opposed to the Indian support to Bangladesh Liberation movement' as it was 'actually skeptical about such a support of a non-Muslim country'.[140] The Jamaat intellectuals are more defensive about their position in the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation Movement, although claiming that the Jamaat is inspired by the Islamic revolutions in Iran and Afghanistan. However, they claim that the Jamaat's contribution in Bangladesh is that a significant section of population thinks that Islam is a 'complete code of life'. However, that does not mean that those very same populations feel that Islam should be established as a political order.[141]

There is also a claim that Jamaat has been victimized on the issue of 'anti-liberation' and 'war criminals'. Haque points out that 'the Jamaat became a victim of opposition propaganda, which alleges the Jamaat as "anti-liberation" and "war criminals"'.[142] But this is precisely the inability and crisis of Jamaat to become a counter-hegemonic force in Bangladesh, where it has to articulate its grievances in terms of victimhood. The same kind of victimhood has been also articulated by the Jamaat in giving justification to its electoral debacle. As Haque pointed out in a field interview that the 2008 Bangladesh Parliamentary elections were 'rigged' and 'manipulated'. According to him, 'it was a calculated and coordinated effort by the Election Commission, military backed caretaker government and the Western powers'.[143] However, he also acknowledged that there were genuine grievances against the corrupt MPs of its alliance partner, BNP, which contributed to the poor performance of the BNP–Jamaat four-party alliance.[144] In his own words, 'Jamaat is opposed to corruption and, thus, demanded to replace 82 sitting BNP MPs in 2008 elections because of their bad record of corruption, which was not heard by the BNP leadership'. Moreover, a section of BNP, 'including Leftist infiltrators in BNP did not want to align with the Jamaat'. After all, 'not many people in the political mainstream of Bangladesh truly support Jamaat'. However,

[140] Field Interview with Prof Choudhury Mahmood Hasan, Faculty of Pharmacy, Dhaka University on 4 June 2009.

[141] Ibid. See Appendix 35.

[142] Field Interview with A. T. M. Fazlul Haque on 2 June 2009.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Ibid. See Appendix 36.

he justifies the tactical alliance between BNP and Jamaat on the ground that it is opposed to the Awami League.[145]

From the above analysis of the field interviews what one can get is that the Jamaat prioritizes the Awami League as the prime antagonistic frontier in Bangladesh. In other words, the secular–nationalist project of the Awami League becomes the prime antagonistic frontier for Jamaati Islamism than, say, any other politico-ideological discourses. However, as pointed out earlier, to become a prominent political player in Bangladesh, the Jamaat has to offer and promise something positive and better than the existing politico-ideological discourses. In this respect, the Jamaat relies on and asserts the 'universality' of Islamic religion by claiming that how it upholds Islam in its entirety in an introductory note in its website:

> 'The Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami upholds Islam in its entirety. It aims at bringing about changes in all phases and spheres of human activities on the basis of the guidance revealed by Allah and exemplified by His Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Thus, the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami is at the same time a religious, political, social and cultural movement. Jamaat-e-Islami further believes in the universality of al Din (The Religion) which Allah revealed to mankind through a succession of Messengers who all contributed to evolving an equitable system of life (Al Din al Haq) until its completion with the arrival of Mohammed (peace and blessings be upon him), the last Prophet, sent by Allah as "the seal of the Prophets"'.[146]

However, merely asserting Islamic universality does not necessarily ensure the victory of the Islamist politico-ideological discourse of Jamaat among the people. In this respect, in the next chapter, one can see the crisis of Islamist populism of Jamaat, apart from engaging more with what Jamaat has to positively offer to the Bangladeshi people, and how the Jamaat responds to various issues under neoliberalism in Bangladesh.

[145] Ibid.

[146] http://www.jamaat-e-islami.org/index.php?option=com_about&task=history accessed on 18 November 2010.

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The Crisis of Islamist Populism of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami

Islamism and neoliberalism: The case of Bangladesh Jamaat

In contrast to India, independent Bangladesh had an experience of moving away from the dominance of public sector in the economy to private industries and foreign investments as early as in the decade of the 1970s with the New Investment Policy of 1974.[1] However, there was initially a thrust upon the public sector and economic self-reliance under Mujib with the adoption of socialist and nationalization policies by 1972.[2] As soon as Mujib took charge of Bangladesh, almost 85 per cent of all industries were transferred to the public sector and only small cottage industry was permitted for the private sector.[3] However, this thrust upon the public sector was coupled with a new policy of private sector and foreign investment as early as 1973 because the public sector was unable to reach even the modest levels of production.[4] By the fiscal year of 1973–74, the private sector grew by 64 per cent and during the period of Zia in the late 1970s and Ershad throughout

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1 Lawrence B. Lesser, 'The Economy', in James Heitzman and Robert L. Worden, ed. *Bangladesh: A Country Study*, Second edition (Washington, DC: Federal Book Division, 1989), p. 106.

2 Charles Peter O'Donnell, *Bangladesh: Biography of a Muslim Nation* (London: Westview Press, 1984), pp 116–119.

3 Craig Baxter, *Bangladesh: A New Nation in an Old Setting* (London: Westview Press, 1984), p. 84.

4 O'Donnell, *Bangladesh*, p. 119.

1980s, economic policies of privatization of industries and denationalization of banks, much akin to neoliberalism gained prominence.[5]

This privatization was not only limited to the domain of manufacturing units or financial sectors but was also extended to social welfare sectors like education, healthcare and public infrastructure, which had traditionally remained within the preserve of the state control.[6] In fact, much like divestment of profit-making public-sector units in India, Bangladesh also witnessed disinvestment of profit-making 'state-owned enterprises'.[7] Soon after independence, Bangladesh became dependent on international monetary agencies like the World Bank, International Development Association (IDA) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance.[8] Much of the assistance however, came in the mid-1970s, when IMF's monetary and fiscal policies of structural adjustments were met.[9] On the advice of the World Bank officials, the Zia regime started denationalizing the shipping and jute industries in the second half of the 1970s along with the government's policy of encouraging domestic private and foreign enterprises for investment in Bangladesh.[10] Much like the neoliberal policies starting from the 1990s in India, the Zia regime offered specific-period tax exemptions to corporate capital of both domestic and foreign origin and revived the moribund Dhaka stock exchange to encourage private investments.[11] Even in rural development, Bangladesh got funds from the World Bank and increasingly became dependent on international aids of the Western governments and the UN agencies for running the economy.[12] The successive pro-US military establishments from the late 1970s onwards presided over rapid economic liberalization and structural adjustment programmes that resulted in increasingly gross inequalities in Bangladesh.[13]

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5 Baxter, *Bangladesh*, p. 85.

6 Rehman Sobhan, 'Privatisation in Bangladesh: An Agenda in Search of a Policy', in Rehman Sobhan, ed. *Privatisation in Bangladesh: An Agenda in Search of a Policy* (Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue & University Press, 2005), p. 3.

7 Selim Raihan, 'Performance of the State-owned Industrial Enterprises in Bangladesh', in Rehman Sobhan, ed. *Privatisation in Bangladesh: An Agenda in Search of a Policy* (Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue & University Press, 2005), pp 37–79; Selim Raihan, 'Disinvestment of Profitable SOEs: Reviewing the Argument for Privatisation', in Sobhan, ed. *Privatisation in Bangladesh*, pp 81–87.

8 Baxter, *Bangladesh*, pp 110–111; O'Donnell, *Bangladesh*, p. 123.

9 Lesser, 'The Economy', pp 108–109.

10 O'Donnell, *Bangladesh*, p. 204.

11 Ibid, p. 204; Lesser, 'The Economy', p. 106.

12 O'Donnell, *Bangladesh*, pp 205–210; p. 252.

13 Khondker, 'US Imperialism and Bengali nationalism', p. 245.

In the first half of the 1970s, the Jamaat was hardly responding to the changing economic policies of the government from nationalization policies to a new policy direction towards the private sector and foreign investment. Its lack of response to such economic policies of the Sheikh Mujib government was due to its illegal status as a political party in the country. It could not operate openly to mobilize people in the streets but rather tried to rebuild its organization based on core Islamic teachings centred on 'local-level Islamic youth circles, mosque councils and religiously based cultural, social welfare and educational associations'.[14] Mumtaz Ahmad points out that 'by the end of 1972, the Jamaat was able to set up 120 local-level units, which held regular weekly meetings and provided institutional resources to the Jamaat workers', whose main aim was to 'regroup its scattered forces', 'relink Bengali Muslims with their Islamic heritage' and 'educate the people against the secular nationalism' that had been the ideological guidance of the Constitution of the new state.[15] Only after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib, the Jamaat in Bangladesh was formally revived under its own name and the Zia government allowed the Jamaat to operate its student wing in universities and colleges.[16] In 1977, Jamaat's student wing Islami Chattro Shibir (ICS) was founded in the central mosque of Dhaka University.[17] By 1978–79, ICS successfully challenged the combined opposition of the Awami League and the communists and had won the student union elections in Rajshahi, Chittagong and Dhaka universities, where they were extremely unpopular just five years ago.[18] By mid-1970s, the Jamaat also revived its labour organization, namely *Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation* (Bangladesh Labour Welfare Federation), originally established on 23 May 1968.[19] On 14 June 1977, the Jamaat established its peasant organization, namely *Bangladesh Chashi Kalyan Samity* (Bangladesh Peasants Welfare Society).[20] Thus, a commentator has argued that since the mid-1970s, there was an upsurge of organizational activities of the Islamists, and it was partly due to the initiatives and funding by the oil-rich Muslim countries to encourage Islamic missionary activities and partly because of the fall-out of the Sheikh Mujib regime like imposed restrictions upon political activities, cooption

14 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 501.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid, pp 501–502.

17 Interview with ICS President Rezaul Karim in Dhaka on 5 June 2009.

18 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 502.

19 Prof Mujibur Rahman, *Introduction to Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation* (Dhaka: Kalyan Prokasoni, 2008), p. 15.

20 *Brochure of Bangladesh Chasi Kalyan Samity* (BCKS) collected on 3 June 2009 from BCKS President, Abdul Kalam Md Yusuf during fieldtrip.

of the discarded Islamists by the Zia regime which forms its support base, the 'sagging economy and the consequent acute economic distress', all of which had driven a section of the masses towards the Islamists.[21]

With the introduction of Ershad's New Industrial Policy of 1982 and a comprehensive revision of that policy in 1986, large-scale privatization of state-owned enterprises (SoEs), liberalization policies like lowering the import barriers by reducing quantitative import restrictions, liberalization of tariff structures, fiscal and commercial incentives to the multinationals by the state and bilateral investment policies for foreign direct investment were witnessed throughout the 1980s.[22] In higher education too, neoliberal policies were followed in Bangladesh much earlier than India. Although the Zia government was open to the idea of private universities in the early 1980s, it came to prominence from early 1990s with the Bangladeshi Parliament passing the Private University Act (PRUA) in 1992.[23] In the decade of the 1980s also, the Jamaat was hardly responding to the economic policies of privatization and liberalization by the Ershad government. Much like its activities of the late 1970s, the Jamaat was more interested to build a strong organizational network throughout the 1980s with classic Islamist literature, particularly distributing and disseminating the Bengali translation of Maududi's works. By the 1980s, ICS had branches in more than 60 per cent of the high schools in all 21 districts of Bangladesh and consistently won 55 per cent of the student union elections in colleges and universities.[24] By 1989, a revitalized Jamaat had 5,000 full members, 50,000 workers, half a million registered supporters, two million unregistered supporters, 68 district branches, 460 sub-district branches, 3,000 union council branches, 5,000 local branches, 500 Jamaat-operated schools and 200 Jamaat-operated hospitals.[25] The political agenda of Jamaat in 1990 during its anti-Ershad campaigns was primarily focussed upon (a) forming alliances with like-minded political parties for restoration of democracy, (b) resistance to the hegemony of India, (c) strengthening relations with 'Islamic countries' like Pakistan and (d) active involvement in Muslim world affairs by Bangladesh.[26] Instead of fighting neoliberal economic policies of successive governments in

21 Emajuddin Ahmed, 'Current Trends of Islam in Bangladesh', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 18, No. 25 (18 June 1983), p. 1114.

22 Lesser, 'The Economy', pp 107–108.

23 Mahmudul Alam, M. Shamsul Haque, Syed Fahad Siddique, *Private Higher Education in Bangladesh*, ed. N. V. Varghese (Paris: UNESCO & IIEP, 2007), pp 17–18.

24 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 502.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

Bangladesh, the Jamaat was persistently opposing to sell natural gas to India and insisted that Bangladesh should take a strong position on the Farakka Dam issue with India.[27]

During the decade of the 1990s and in the new millennium, a 'national consensus' has been achieved by the successive governments led by two principal parties, Awami League and BNP, to follow economic policies according to the guidelines of IMF and the World Bank.[28] Such economic policies under structural adjustment programmes and capitalist globalization have made Bangladesh a typical peripheral capitalist country with greater unemployment, increasing poverty on the one hand and super rich ruling elite on the other.[29] Contemporary Bangladesh has also witnessed repression of working classes and peasantry besides increasing their insecurity, the emergence of NGO as a new corporate body, greater participation of private players in welfare sectors like health and education corresponded with diminishing role of the state in this sector, environmental degradation and increasing demands from the multinational companies to have absolute control over natural resources like oil, gas and mineral resources.[30]

In this respect, Islamist parties in Bangladesh generally remain inimical to the process of globalization as they equate it with the Western influence in a Muslim country.[31] However, despite being an Islamist party, the Jamaat has often maintained silence on the process of globalization in Bangladesh and its links with the Western powers. This silence is due to the tactical compulsions of coalition politics[32] where major electoral parties like Awami League and BNP have ensured the process of globalization and maintained links with the Western powers. In such a context, the Bangladesh Jamaat has been unable to become a credible political alternative and rather has remained a junior partner of the two principal parties, the Awami League and the BNP.[33] Besides tactical compulsions of coalition politics, the Jamaat has in fact primarily concentrated on addressing political issues than economic ones. Abul Asad, a member of

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27 Ibid, p. 503.

28 Anu Muhammad, *Development or Destruction? Essays on Global Hegemony, Corporate Grabbing and Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Shrabon Prokashani, 2007), p. 88.

29 Ibid, pp 24–38.

30 Ibid, pp 66–162.

31 Rehman Sobhan, 'Bangladesh's Political Economy in an Age of Globalisation', in Rehman Sobhan, ed. *Bangladesh Facing the Challenges of Globalisation* (Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue & University Press, 2002), p. 124.

32 Ibid.

33 Rehman Sobhan, *The Political Economy of Malgovernance in Bangladesh: Collected Works of Rehman Sobhan, Vol. 3* (Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue, 2007), p. 145.

Majlis-e-Shoora (highest policy-and decision-making body) of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and editor of Jamaat's daily, *Sangram* has in fact, admitted that the main issues in Bangladeshi politics is generally related to political agenda and not with economic agenda with anti-military and anti-dictatorship agenda being central to political mobilization.[34] He further argued that during the period of 1991–2006, when Bangladesh witnessed periodic elections, every five years, the main issues that dominated the political discourse of Bangladesh were war crimes, parliament boycott, arrests of political leadership, etc.[35] He pointed out that despite such prominence of burning political issues, the Jamaat has routinely reacted to international issues like war on Muslim countries.[36] On the issue of privatization, he argued that a culture against nationalization and in favour of privatization is prevalent in Bangladesh because of the inefficiency of loss-making public sector, although the Jamaat, in principle, is against rampant privatization.[37]

In my entire field work of two months in February 2009 and, subsequently, in June 2009, no Jamaat leader or supporter has ever recalled any significant political mobilization of the Jamaat against neoliberal economic policies of successive Bangladeshi governments. In fact, for party funds and elections, the Jamaat gets financial help from local businessmen, who have benefited from such neoliberal policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization. In this regard, a Jamaat intellectual, Professor A. T. M. Fazlul Haque of Dhaka University's Geology department points out that the 'BNP candidate Major M. Abdul Mannan Shaheb, who is a multi-millionaire industrialist and a fund contributor to BNP-Jamaat in elections in giving money to voters, organizing rallies, public meetings, posters, banners, hoardings, etc. meant for electoral expenses, stated that in spending money for election purposes, Jamaat organizers and cadres are more honest than the BNP workers'.[38] Moreover, the Jamaat leadership and intellectuals also confirm that the organization has made investments in private schools, colleges, madrasas, universities, clinics, hospitals, diagnostic centres, real estates, Islamic banks, etc.[39] In other words, in a neoliberal policy regime, the culture of privatization, which gives boost to

[34] Field interview with Abul Asad in Dhaka on 16 February 2009.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Field Interview with A. T. M. Fazlul Haque in Dhaka on 2 June 2009.

[39] Field Interviews with ex-Jamaat President Ghulam Azam in Dhaka on 12 February 2009 and Jamaat intellectual, Prof Abdur Rab (Vice Chancellor of Mannarat International University, Dhaka) on 7 June 2009.

new private enterprises has, in fact, benefited the Jamaat with its investments in certain sectors of the economy to raise revenues for the organization.[40]

In this respect, Bangladeshi economist Prof Abul Barkat, based in Dhaka University argues that the Islamists have investments in 'enterprises ranging from large financial institutions to household level micro-credit, from mosques and madrasas to news media and IT, from nationwide trading enterprises to local-level NGOs', whose 'estimated amount of annual net profit generated by these enterprises would be US$200 million'.[41] He further argues that 'all these economic enterprises are run by ideologically motivated and professionally competent persons' and 'at least 10 per cent of their net profits is being used to finance political organization', sufficient enough to give salaries to 5,00,000 full time cadres of Islamist parties.[42] According to Barkat, the annual net profit earned by the Islamists through these economic enterprises is equivalent to 6 per cent of the government's annual development budget or about 4 per cent of national export earnings.[43] Similarly, 'the economy of fundamentalists' have grown 'by 7.5 to 9 per cent a year, compared to only 4.5 per cent national economic growth', while the 'fundamentalists' share of the economy' amounts to '1.53 per cent of the total national investment' and about '3.3 per cent of total revenue income' per year.[44] Barkat argues that out of Tk 12 billion annual net profit, financial institutions account for about 27 per cent and Islamic NGOs for about 20.8 per cent.[45] A news report in the top English daily of Bangladesh, which covered a special story on Barkat's research findings, points out that 'the Islamist forces, divided in numerous groups and sub-groups, received huge foreign aid in 1970s and 1980s', and 'they invested that money in setting up financial institutions from which they reaped huge profits, part of which they spent for organizational activities in-line with their political agenda'.[46]

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40 Abul Barkat, 'Economics of Fundamentalism and Growth of Political Islam in Bangladesh' available at: http://www.secularvoiceofbangladesh.org/article%20by%20Abul%20Barkat.htm accessed on 30 September 2010.

41 Ibid. Also see Abul Barkat, 'Dharma Jar Jar Rastro Sobar: Mohabiporjoy rodhe Sekular Oiker Kono Bikolpo Nei' (Religion for Individuals and State for All: No Alternative to Secular Unity in Resisting the Grand Debacle), *Keynote presentation in a seminar organized by Secular Unity Bangladesh* in Dhaka Press Club on 31 December 2005.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Front page news titled: 'Radicals-run bodies fetch Tk 12 billion a year', *The Daily Star* (Friday, 22 April 2005).

In the 1990s and the new millennium, the Jamaat was particularly keen about privatization of the public sector enterprises. The election manifesto of Jamaat in 1996 stated that in a phase-wise manner, the existing industries owned by the government would be transferred to private hands by taking into account the legitimate interests of the people, workers and staff.[47] The same proposal of privatization of state-owned enterprises was again given in the 2001 election manifesto of the Jamaat with the exception being made in case of defence industries and those extremely important for the public.[48] Similarly, in the 2008 election manifesto of Jamaat, the call for development of private sector by modernizing the 'relevant rules and regulations and increasing the cooperation of the government' was given.[49] In this respect, the Bangladeshi Jamaat is ideologically committed to private enterprises.

The 2008 election manifesto of Jamaat also gave a call to encourage 'foreign investment' by bringing 'reforms to the Board of Investment and amending the relevant rules and regulations without marginalizing the interests of the nation'.[50] Then, it also argued in favour of reducing the 'interest rates' of both 'nationalized and private banks' and also suggested to reduce 'the difference between interest rates of savings accounts and loan accounts'.[51] In the light of the above-mentioned economic policies of Jamaat stated in its official election manifestos in the last three elections of Bangladesh, one can argue that there are strong tendencies of Bangladesh Jamaat to follow a neoliberal trajectory of privatization, liberalization and financial reforms in the banking sector. Much akin to the neoliberal policies of privatization and divestment of public sector units, encouraging foreign investments and lowering the interest rates in banks, the Bangladesh Jamaat has in fact argued on similar lines for nearly last two decades.

Moreover, under neoliberalism, when labour law reforms and a propaganda against strikes are being carried out by sections of industrial, political and media establishments in Bangladesh, the labour wing of Jamaat argues against strikes and *hartals* (a Bengali term for a militant strike-like forced closure). Prof Mujibur Rahman, the president of Jamaat's labour wing, *Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation* (BSKF) argues:

'Generally, we differ with other trade unions on the issue of strikes. We don't call strikes or hartals and do not approve any destructive agitations and demonstrations. We want healthy relations between the owner of factories and

47 *Election Manifesto of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh 1996*, p. 19.

48 *Election Manifesto of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh 2001*, pp 10–11.

49 *Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami 2008*, p. 14.

50 Ibid, p. 15.

51 Ibid, p. 14.

the labour. We are always in favour of consultative policies, discussions, dialogue and advisory policies. We prefer to deal labour issues in tripartite talks between the factory owner, trade union and the local administration or the government'.[52]

According to Jamaat ideologues, although Islam approves 'right to form association' and by that logic 'right to form trade union'[53], there is no scope of right to strike in Islam. According to Ghulam Azam (ex-President of Jamaat in Bangladesh), 'Islam does not recognize any classification of people on the basis of economic considerations, and so the method of class-struggle is not conducive to a truly Islamic society'.[54] This is precisely why Jamaat's labour wing 'tries to negotiate' with the factory owners by 'avoiding confrontation'[55] although it considers 'trade-unionism as a democratic method of collective bargaining'.[56] According to Jamaat leadership, 'Islam does not only protect the rights of the workers but also protects the rights of the employers'.[57] Moreover, according to Islamic principles, the rights of the owner and labour are mutually complementary.[58] In addressing the question of 'labour problem', the Jamaat leader, Ghulam Azam gave an example of the period before the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan, where labour–capital disputes were settled by guaranteeing rights and privileges of labour invoked through the courts of law and without resorting to 'strikes, strife, jails, hatred and ill-will and unrest, disruption in economic life and confusion in political affairs', which he describes as 'the cherished dreams of the Communists'.[59] He further states that 'the ideal before the Jama'at is to eliminate in a growing industrial economy the struggle between the labour and the capital and establish an order in which none could coerce or exploit the other'.[60] In a neoliberal setting, such capital friendly trade-unionism of Jamaat that does not opt for confrontation with the capital with traditional tactics of strikes and in fact also cares for the rights of the capitalists only creates conditions to strengthen neoliberal hegemony in Bangladesh. The 2008 election manifesto of Jamaat argues to put an end to the 'involvement of teachers and students in party politics in educational institutions

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52 Field Interview with Professor Mujibur Rahman (President of BSKF) in Dhaka on 16 February 2009.

53 Professor Mujibur Rahman, *Islam and Rights of Labours* (Dhaka: Kalyan Prokashoni, 2006), pp 25–27.

54 Ghulam Azam, *Jama'at-e-Islami: Ideology and Movement*, 1968, rev. and enlarged edition (Dhaka: Adhunik Prokashani, 2006), p. 110.

55 Rahman, *Introduction to Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation*, p. 22.

56 Azam, *Jama'at-e-Islami*, p. 110.

57 Rahman, *Introduction to Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation*, p. 9.

58 Rahman, *Islam and Rights of Labours*, p. 18.

59 Azam, *Jama'at-e-Islami*, p. 109.

60 Ibid.

by making necessary amendments to the existing legal framework'.[61] Previously, in the 'Introduction' of the book, it was argued that neoliberal policy regimes, in general, seek to depoliticize varied sections of the population by weakening organized forms of collective action. Jamaat's opposition to strikes, and organized politics inside universities, only creates conditions for strengthening neoliberalism as a policy regime in Bangladesh.

So far I have discussed how Bangladesh Jamaat is complicit towards neoliberalism by not waging any significant political mobilization *against* neoliberal economic policies of privatization and neutralization of militant labour movements, both inside and outside the parliament. However, even if it follows an economic policy that helps to sustain neoliberalism, nonetheless, it proposes a cautious approach in its stated economic and social policies in many other issues of running the country. In its successive election manifestos of 1996, 2001 and 2008, firstly, the Jamaat has argued more in favour of petty production and local domestic capital, which are currently threatened by the incursion of foreign multinational corporations under a neoliberal economic framework. Secondly, in all these manifestos, it has given a call for reducing 'foreign dependency' and favours to pursue a policy of 'self-sufficiency'. Thirdly, it has argued in favour of increasing 'agricultural subsidies', state support in controlling prices of agricultural goods, monitoring policies against 'land grabbing', interest-free 'agricultural loans' and 'rural credit system' in an era, when neoliberal economic policies have aggravated agrarian crisis in several developing nations like Bangladesh. Fourthly, the Jamaat election manifestos have consistently supported free school education and university education in a phase-wise manner and promoting public health services 'to ensure the basic right to medical treatment' in a time when successive Bangladesh governments seek to privatize social sectors like health and education. Finally, 'poverty alleviation' programmes like 'economic assistance' and 'special financial packages' for people below poverty line and 'social security' measures for older persons, widows, disabled persons, orphans, beggars, slum dwellers, etc. are announced in Jamaat election manifestos. The extensive social welfare network of the Jamaat in Bangladesh, with significant investments in education, health and emergency relief work by many senior leaders of the party, serves a fundamental purpose of establishing the religious identity of the party. It also facilitates religious political parties like Jamaat to plan strategically and to balance their religious commitment and practical survival needs.[62] Some of these targeted policies towards socially vulnerable sections of the population are entirely consistent with neoliberalism of Washington variety as it was discussed in the 'Introduction' of the book.

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[61] *Election Manifesto of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami 2008*, p. 13.

[62] Masooda Bano, 'Welfare Work and Politics of Jama'at-i-Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (7 January 2012), pp 86–93.

However, some of the above-mentioned policies of Jamaat are in fact a break from aggressive neoliberalism that favours an unbridled market economy in every sphere of life while others are entirely consistent with neoliberalism of the Washington consensus. Clearly, Jamaat in Bangladesh does not subscribe to neoliberal policies in every aspect of socio-economic life. In this respect, Jamaat's approach is not always consistent with neoliberalism. Rather, its policies are pro-capital and pro-business but not necessarily pro-market, anti-state and pro-globalization.

After surveying the economic policies of Bangladesh Jamaat, I will rather argue that this Islamist party is in favour of a welfare state with active role of the government in controlling and regulating the economy while supporting social sectors like health, education and social security. I will discuss the limits of such a welfare state as proposed by Jamaat in the next chapter. After discussing Bangladesh Jamaat's economic policies, I will now deal with its response to issues of censorship and moral policing against what it calls 'Western cultural globalization'.

Censorship, moral policing and violence of Bangladesh Jamaat: Assertions against the 'Western' cultural globalization

The leadership of Bangladesh Jamaat has argued in my fieldwork interviews that 'Western cultural globalization' is currently threatening Islamic values among the Muslim youth. In this respect, they pointed out that besides Television, cinema and pornography, the issues of 'free sex', 'nudity', 'obscenity' and 'sexual permissiveness' have also captured Bengali literature which was amply reflected in the writings of Taslima Nasrin. Moreover, according to the Jamaat leadership, Nasrin also attempts to argue and make 'atrocious comments' against God, its prophet, the Holy Quran and the Muslim community. To the Jamaat leadership, Nasrin has committed blasphemy and should be punished according to the Sharia laws. The politics of censorship propagated by the Islamists in Bangladesh including the Jamaat was able to impose a statist ban on Taslima's writings under the BNP regime in 1993–94. Commentators have argued that it is a kind of police measure as a method of repression.[63] By 1993, several books of Taslima were well sold both in India and in Bangladesh, prior to her 'crowning moment' of receiving the prestigious *Ananda Purashkar* in West Bengal, India.[64] Such popularity was coupled with her outspoken statements about repealing the *Sharia*-based 'discriminatory

[63] For an elaborate analysis of state censorship on Taslima's work in Bangladesh see Zafar, 'Under the gaze of the state: policing literature and the case of Taslima Nasrin'.

[64] Zafar, 'Policing Literature, Disciplining Taslima', pp 157–158.

Muslim Family Law'[65] and arguing that the holy texts like the Quran, Vedas and Bible being 'out of place and out of time' and for 'progress', one needs to 'move beyond these ancient texts'.[66]

The promotion of Taslima's writings and her remarks 'on the Koran and *Sharia*' helped the Islamists, 'especially the Jamaat-i-Islami, Bangladesh, incite mass protests, demanding Taslima's execution for apostasy as per the Islamic dictate'.[67] The centre-right BNP-led government, an ally of the Jamaat issued a warrant and then arrested her 'for allegedly violating the religious feelings of her fellow citizens', thus buttressing 'the illegally invoked *fatwa*' with 'the legally invoked censor'.[68] Commentators have pointed out that the 'Islamic right', especially the Jamaat as the largest Islamist party in Bangladesh, had unsuccessfully lobbied the BNP Government, once in 1992 and then again in 2004, to at least introduce a blasphemy law[69] for 'creating new offences of "insult to the Koran" and "insult to the Prophet", respectively carrying maximum sentences of life imprisonment and death'.[70] If the Jamaat had succeeded in passing the blasphemy bill in the National Parliament, it 'would have not only introduced life imprisonment and capital punishment as penalties, but also required no proof of intent on the part of the alleged blasphemer'.[71] Taslima was subsequently forced to leave Bangladesh and since 1994, she is in exile, mainly in Sweden, where she was granted citizenship, and periodically in Kolkata, India.[72] Even in Kolkata and in some other parts of India, Islamist agitations took place against her stay in India and she was finally forced to leave India as was narrated in Chapter 3. The censorship case of Taslima has two distinct arguments: (a) 'law and order compulsions and, hence, the attempt to regulate what the state considers hate speech and/or offence to religious sensibility' and (b) 'offence to morality, usually obscenity, and also blasphemy'.[73]

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65 Ibid, p. 159.

66 Ali Riaz, *Voice and Silence: Contextualizing Taslima Nasreen* (Dhaka: Ankur Prakashani, 1995), pp 43–44.

67 Zafar, 'Policing Literature, Disciplining Taslima', p. 159.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid, p. 160.

70 Sara Hossain, 'Apostates, Ahmadis and Advocates: Use and Abuse of offences against Religion in Bangladesh', in Ayesha Imam, Jenny Morgan and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds. *Warning Signs of Fundamentalisms* (Nottingham: Women Living Under Muslim Law Publications, 2004), pp 91–92.

71 Zafar, 'Policing Literature, Disciplining Taslima', p. 160.

72 Ibid, p. 161.

73 Ibid, p. 157.

While the first argument is being given by the state, the second argument is given by the Islamists who create pressure on the state to take action against the moral offender or the blasphemer. In this respect, the Islamist assertion against Taslima is actually a 'moral policing', which turned violent as it was discussed in Chapter 3. I will further discuss the dynamics of such Islamist violence against controversial authors or persons, who have been alleged as 'blasphemer', 'atheist' etc. in the next chapter by trying to explain why the Islamists, more often than not, choose an assertive and violent campaign on these issues and could not overlook or ignore such issues or at best democratically debate and argue such issues.

In my field interviews, on the issue of 'homosexuality' and 'live-in relationships', the Jamaat leadership of Bangladesh had out-rightly rubbished such acts as 'un-Islamic' and 'illegal' (*haram*). They argue that such acts are unknown in a Muslim country like Bangladesh and are products of perverse Western mindset.

Electoral politics of Bangladesh Jamaat: Success and failures

After analyzing the politico-ideological articulations of Bangladesh Jamaat vis-à-vis neoliberal capitalism and 'Western cultural globalization', the important question that comes to the fore is how does Jamaat fair in electoral politics in Bangladesh? Firstly, whether there is a relationship between its stated politico-ideological positions on varied issues and its electoral outcomes. Secondly, whether electoral outcomes of Jamaat are independent of its politico-ideological articulations and are more dependent on organizational strength of Jamaat and tactical alliance with mainstream political parties like BNP? Thirdly, how does Jamaat grapple with a strong ideological orientation within its organization on the one hand and electoralism on the other? In other words, is there a contradictory or a complementary relationship between its politico-ideological expressions and electoral strategy? Fourthly, can the election data comprehensively identify the moments of success and failures of Jamaat in politically mobilizing the Bangladeshi people behind its Islamist agenda? Finally, can we make a proper assessment of Jamaat's *struggle for hegemony* or *crisis of hegemony* in Bangladeshi politics by only referring to election data or is it prudent to take into account broader politico-ideological discourses in Bangladesh and the response of Jamaat to those discourses?

After the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971, the Jamaat was banned as a result of adopting secularism as state policy by the Mujib government. Thus, the Jamaat was banned during the 7 March 1973 election and was unable to participate in that election, which witnessed the overwhelming victory of Sheikh Mujib led Bangladesh Awami League (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1
Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1973 (total seats: 289)

Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share
Bangladesh Awami League	289	282	73.20%
National Awami Party (Muzaffar Group)	224	0	8.33%
National Awami Party	169	0	5.32%
Jatiya Samajtantric Dal	237	1	6.52%
Bangladesh Jatiya League	8	1	0.33%
Total Independents (120)	96	5	5.25%

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

The parliamentary election was followed by the Presidential election on 8 April 1973 in which Abu Syeed Chowdhury was elected under Parliamentary management.[74] Before the parliamentary election of 28 February 1979, a direct presidential election was held on 3 June 1978 in which General Ziaur Rahaman was elected[75] with a huge margin with serious charges of electoral rigging.[76] The 1979 general election witnessed the rise of Zia led BNP, see Table 5.2, as a major political party in the electoral politics of Bangladesh, although the landslide victory of BNP was suspected of blatant malpractices and rigging.[77]

The 1979 election saw the prominence of religious-identity-based parties like Bangladesh Muslim League and Islamic Democratic League (whose 'organizational backbone' was the Jamaat-e-Islami)[78] in the national political scenario of Bangladesh unlike 1973 elections, when there was a constitutional ban on religious-identity-based parties (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2 above). In 1976, when the Islamic Democratic League (IDL) led by Mawlana Abdur Rahim obtained permission from the government (a martial law administration led by Zia-ur-Rahman), the Jamaat activists began to work under the banner of IDL. A few Jamaat leaders also contested the 1979 general elections as nominees of the IDL and six of them got elected. In 1979, when

74 Information from Bangladesh Election Commission website: available at http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/QLTemplate1.php?Parameter_QLSCat_ID=37 accessed on 9 November 2010.

75 Ibid.

76 Rahman and Hasan, *Iron Bars of Freedom*, pp 233–234.

77 Ibid, pp 239–241.

78 Franda, *Bangladesh*, p. 269.

the ban on religion-based political parties was withdrawn, the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh was revived.[79]

Table 5.2
Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1979 (total seats: 300)

Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share
Bangladesh Jatiatabadi Dal (BNP)	298	207	41.16%
Bangladesh Awami League (Malek)	295	39	24.55%
Bangladesh Awami League (Mizan)	184	2	2.78%
Bangladesh Muslim League & Islamic Democratic League (Rahim)	266	20	10.08%
Bangladesh Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)	240	8	4.84%
National Awami Party (Muzaffar)	89	1	2.25%
Bangladesh Gana Front	46	2	0.60%
Bangladesh Samayabadi Dal	20	1	0.39%
Bangladesh Jatiya League (BJL)	13	2	0.36%
Bangladesh Gantantrik Andolan	18	1	0.17%
Jatiya Ekota Party	5	1	0.23%
Independent Candidates (422)	*	16	10.10%

Note: *Information not available
Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

While getting state patronage under Zia's regime, the Muslim League and Jamaat backed Islamic Democratic League contested the 1979 elections under the slogan of 'defeat the Awami League and keep Islam safe in the hands of President Zia'.[80] Also, after the assassination of Sheikh Mujib in the wake of a military coup, Bangladesh Awami League was split between rival factions. The 1979 election also witnessed the fragmentation of the electoral system in

[79] http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/J_0049.htm accessed on 22 August 2014.
[80] Franda, *Bangladesh*, p. 232.

Bangladesh with no party getting more than 50 per cent votes as compared to the 1973 election. The parliamentary elections of 28 February 1979, 7 May 1986 and 3 March 1988 were organized by military rulers and were highly controversial.[81] In 1979 election, although the ban on Jamaat was lifted by Zia-ur-Rahman, it could not contest the election because of its organizational weaknesses. Thus, in independent Bangladesh, Jamaat first contested elections in 1986 getting just 10 seats and 4.61 per cent votes (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3
Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1986 (total seats: 300)

Parties	Seats Won	Vote Share
Bangladesh Awami League	76	26.16%
Jatiya Party	153	42.34%
Bangladesh Muslim League	4	1.45%
Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh	10	4.61%
Bangladesh Communist Party	5	0.91%
National Awami Party (NAP) (Muzaffar)	2	0.71%
National Awami Party (NAP)	5	1.29%
BAKSHAL	3	0.67%
Bangladesh Workers Party	3	0.53%
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) (Rab)	4	2.54%
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) (Shahjahan Shiraj)	3	0.87%
Independents	32	16.19%

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

Like the 1978 presidential election, on 15 November 1981 direct presidential election was held in which Justice Abdus Sattar was elected following the assassination of President Ziaur Rahman on 30 May 1981. He was deposed by a bloodless military coup of Husain Mohammad Ershad on 24 March 1982. However, the 1986 election was highly controversial because 'the counting of ballots was dramatically suspended and certain announced results were later reversed'.[82] The 1986 election was also marred by 'violence' and 'rigging' by

[81] Enayetur Rahim, 'Electoral Politics in Bangladesh, 1975-88', in Rafiuddin Ahmed, ed. *Religion, Nationalism and Politics in Bangladesh* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1990), p. 95.

[82] Ibid.

the military junta of Ershad as noted by foreign observers and media reports.[83] Such a controversial election of May 1986 was followed by another controversial election in March 1988, for which till date the election commission has not come up with a data about 'percentage of invalid votes', 'number of polling stations' and 'number of polling booths' as it has been the case with other parliamentary elections in Bangladesh.[84] Although, the election commission now shows 51.81 per cent votes cast in the 1988 election,[85] election analysts have argued that 'the opposition count, as corroborated by foreign observers, allowed only one per cent'.[86] Thus, both the 1986 and 1988 elections are generally not regarded as free and fair. By the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the Jamaat, by the admission of its own leadership, was 'primarily an urban party that appeals to the religiously minded educated classes'.[87] This support base of Jamaat among the urban educated middle classes had undergone a significant change with new rural constituencies voting for it as evident in 1991 election. In fact, by 1990s, both *salish* (village arbitration) and *fatwa* (religious edict) in rural Bangladesh became intricately connected to the rise of Islamist political ideology and increasing strengths of Islamist parties in Bangladesh.[88] This support for Jamaat in rural Bangladesh was remarkable, given the fact that Muslim identity in Bangladesh has been seen as primarily a different kind of syncretic 'community concept' than an exclusive 'Islamic community'. The belief system of Muslims in rural Bangladesh is also marked by belief in various religious figures like *pirs* whose followers carve out a shared space of community bonding and brotherhood. Moreover, the Bengali elements and caste attitudes in rural Bangladesh can be also seen among a significant section of the populace where Islamic orthodoxy has remained marginal in making an impact on the rural population.[89]

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83 A collection of such media reports can be found in Abdul Matin, ed. *Ershad's Election Fraud* (London: Radical Asia Publications, 1986).

84 Information from Bangladesh Election Commission website available at http://www.ecs.gov.bd/Bangla/Elec_Par.php accessed on 30 October 2010.

85 Ibid.

86 Rahim, 'Electoral Politics in Bangladesh, 1975–88', p. 95.

87 Franda, *Bangladesh*, p. 214.

88 Ali Riaz, 'Traditional Institutions as Tools of Political Islam in Bangladesh', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (2005), pp 171–196.

89 Abecassis, *Identity, Islam and Human Development in Rural Bangladesh*, p. 25.

Table 5.4
Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1991 (total seats: 300)

Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share
Bangladesh Jatiatabadi Dal (BNP)	300	140	30.81%
Bangladesh Awami League	264	88	30.08%
Jatiya Party	272	35	11.92%
Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh	222	18	12.13%
Bangladesh Krishak-Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL)	68	5	1.81%
Bangladesh Communist Party (CPB)	49	5	1.19%
Islami Oikya Jote	59	1	0.79%
Bangladesh National Awami Party (NAP) (Muzaffar)	31	1	0.76%
Ganatantri Party	16	1	0.45%
National Democratic Party (NDP)	20	1	0.36%
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) (Shahjahan Shiraj)	31	1	0.25%
Bangladesh Workers Party	35	1	0.19%
Independent Candidates (424)	424	3	4.39%

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

During the political movement against the 'autocratic rule' of Hussain Muhammad Ershad, Jamaat members in the National Parliament resigned on 3 December 1987. The Awami League led 8-party alliance, BNP led 7-party alliance, 5-party alliance and the Jamaat-e-Islami participated in the anti-Ershad movement. Such a movement based on political alliances became a mass upsurge by the end of 1990. As a result, General Ershad was compelled to resign from the presidency, and power was handed over to the caretaker

government headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.[90] In the parliamentary election held on 27 February 1991, the Jamaat contested 222 seats, winning 18 seats, and got 12.13 per cent votes, a sharp rise in its electoral performance when compared with 1986 and its best performance so far (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4).

In 1991, the total voter turnout was 55.45 per cent.[91] In that election, the Jamaat became the fourth largest party in the Parliament and third largest party in terms of national vote share after BNP and Awami League (see Table 5.4). This success of Jamaat was possible due to its strong organization by late 1980s as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Moreover, its political campaigns and street demonstrations against the military rule of Ershad and its joint political movements with other secular parties for periodic elections and restoration of democracy gave impressive electoral dividends.

After the 1991 election, BNP was only able to form the government with the outside support of the Jamaat, which increased Jamaat's legitimacy and strength of political bargaining in the country.[92] In rendering its support to BNP in forming the government, it also secured 2 out of 30 reserved seats for women in the National Parliament.[93] Following the elections, in December 1991, Professor Ghulam Azam was elected *ameer* (President) of Jamaat-e-Islami, with his citizenship declared valid by the High Court, and he continued to hold this office till December 2000.[94]

The 1991 election performance of Jamaat suggests that Islamism can have a cross-sectional mobilization behind it where it can attain a *mass* character, even if not a *class* one. This is similar to various other contexts of Muslim societies in the early 1990s, where Islamism was out of direct control of political power, but nonetheless enjoyed popularity among a significant section of the population. The different sectors of population might find a common platform of opposition under the banner of Islam(ism) against an antagonistic frontier of the power bloc represented either by the 'state' or mainstream political parties. Although the Jamaat has never been close to an electorally dominant party, its noticeable presence has influenced Bangladeshi politics to move towards Islamization over the years, which is evident in the Awami League and BNP politicians' eagerness 'to publicly demonstrate their observance of Islamic rituals'.[95]

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90 http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/J_0049.htm accessed on 22 August 2014.

91 *Nirbachani Karjyakram Pratibedan: Jatiya Shangshad Nirbachan, 1991* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Election Commission, 1991), p. 66.

92 Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, New Expanded edition, p. 79.

93 http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/J_0049.htm accessed on 22 August 2014.

94 Ibid.

95 Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh*, p. 170.

By the mid-1990s, the Awami League could enlist support of the Jamaat in their movement for introducing the caretaker government system to replace the BNP government. To intensify the movement, the Jamaat members of the National Parliament resigned in December 1994.[96] In 1996 elections, the total voter turnout was 74.96 per cent, much higher than the 1991 elections.[97] In that election, the Jamaat contested for all 300 seats, and got only 3 seats and 8.61 per cent votes even if it had contested 78 more seats than 1991 (see Tables 5.4 and 5.5). Thus, in 1996, there was a reduction of 3.52 per cent votes for Jamaat from the 1991 figure. The party poked 12.13 per cent votes by contesting only 222 seats in 1991, but just got 8.61 per cent votes by contesting 300 seats in 1996.

Table 5.5
Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 1996 (total seats: 300)

Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share
Bangladesh Awami League	300	146	37.44%
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	300	116	33.60%
Jatiya Party	293	32	16.40%
Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh	300	3	8.61%
Islami Oikya Jote	166	1	1.09%
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) (Rab)	67	1	0.23%
Independent Candidates	284	1	1.06%

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

In this regard, how can we explain the decline of vote and seat share of Jamaat in 1996 when compared with 1991 election even if it contested far more seats in 1996 than it did in 1991? In this respect, the 1996 election is the starting point of crisis for Jamaat's electoral mobilization behind its Islamist project, which is effectively reflected in its sharp decline in seat share and vote share in the 1996 election, when compared with the 1991 election (see Tables 5.4 and 5.5).

[96] http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/J_0049.htm accessed on 22 August 2014.

[97] *Statistical Report: Seventh Jatiya Shangshad Election* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Election Commission, 1996), p. 9.

Jamaat's success in 1991 election was due to its anti-Ershad agitations and campaigns for democratic elections from late 1980s onwards. Moreover, the resignation of 10 Jamaat MPs from the Parliament during late 1980s in protest of Ershad's continuing military rule and Jamaat joining hands with secular parties during the anti-Ershad mobilizations as discussed earlier had given some credibility to its stigmatized past of being associated with pro-Pakistan and anti-Bangladesh ideological inclinations. Thus, when late 1980s onwards, Jamaat launched a political movement for electoral democracy, giving a call for liberation from military dictatorship, it gained popularity among the masses as reflected in the electoral gains of Jamaat in 1991. In contrast, Jamaat's working relationship with BNP and with an outside support to BNP-led government in early 1990s hindered them to play any real oppositional role in the politics of Bangladesh. During 1991–96, the Jamaat could not replicate the kind of oppositional politics that it played against a governmental power bloc like the military establishment of Ershad during late 1980s. On the contrary, Jamaat's outside support to the BNP-led government in early 1990s, complemented with lack of militant opposition against the government, created conditions, where it got identified with the power bloc. In those circumstances, the underdog character of Jamaat in late 1980s as an oppositional force got discredited and transformed into a close relationship with the power bloc. In such a situation, it lost its plebian character, representing the *people* against the power bloc, and by 1996, the 'people' who voted for Jamaat in 1991 turned their backs to Jamaat. Moreover, its flip-flop and ambiguous position vis-à-vis the BNP also confused many of its traditional supporters in the 1996 election.[98] This ambiguous position of Jamaat vis-à-vis BNP is reflected in the fact that in 1991, it supported the BNP government from outside, while in the year 1994, it chose to have a political alliance with the Awami League and the Jatiya Party 'in the two-year struggle against the BNP which culminated in the resignation of Khaleda Zia'[99] in March 1996 and, then, chose to contest all 300 seats alone without any pre-poll electoral alliance with any other party.

However, even if the Jamaat suffered enormous losses in 1996 election, the hegemonic presence of Islamic religion, if not the Islamist party, became more visible in Bangladeshi politics. This hegemonic presence of a moderate Islam in a Muslim country, where a significant population is 'God fearing', compelled even the secularist Sheikh Hasina to make 'some symbolic gestures to demonstrate her loyalty to Islam'.[100] In fact, after the 1996 election win, the Awami League

[98] Arshad Mahmud, 'Jamaat's Debacles', *Outlook Magazine*, 3 July 1996.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, p. 288.

looked 'transformed' and 'quite similar' to BNP.[101] As far as the presence of Islamic religion in Bangladeshi politics is concerned, the voters find the two main parties no less religious than the Jamaat since both the Awami League and the BNP have made special efforts to make it appear that they are indeed 'God-fearing' and this strategy of the mainstream parties has undercut Jamaat's claim of being the 'sole upholder of Islam'.[102] Similarly, a political analyst has argued that 'the Jamaat has never enjoyed popular support in Bangladesh because the people are basically moderates and not inclined towards fundamentalism' since to the majority population, 'religion is a private affair' and the people do not like those who use it for 'partisan purposes'.[103]

Table 5.6
Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 2001 (total seats: 300)

Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	252	193	40.97%
Bangladesh Awami League	300	62	40.13%
Islami Oikya Front	281	14	7.25%
Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh	31	17	4.28%
Independent Candidates (486)	*	6	4.06%
Bangladesh Jatiya Party (N-F)	11	4	1.12%
Islami Oikya Jote	7	2	0.68
Krishak Sramik Janata Dal	39	1	0.47%
Jatiya Party (Manju)	140	1	0.44%

Note: *Information not available
Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

In December 2000, Professor Ghulam Azam resigned from the post of national President of Jamaat, and Maulana Motiur Rahman Nizami became the Ameer (President/Chief Leader) of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh.[104] In 2001, the Jamaat had a pre-poll seat adjustment with BNP and just contested 31 seats while winning

[101] Ibid.
[102] Mahmud, 'Jamaat's Debacles', *Outlook Magazine*, 3 July 1996.
[103] Ibid.
[104] http://www.banglapedia.org/HT/J_0049.htm accessed on 22 August 2014.

17 seats and 4.28 per cent votes (see Table 5.6). In the general elections held on 1 October 2001, the BNP led 4-party alliance secured more than two-thirds of the seats in the National Parliament and as a member of the alliance, Jamaat was included in the government led by Begum Khaleda Zia with two Jamaat leaders in the cabinet.[105]

Table 5.7
Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 2008 (total seats: 299)

Parties	Seats Contested	Seats Won	Vote Share
Bangladesh Awami League	263	230	48.06%
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	259	29	32.45%
Jatiya Party	56	27	7.05%
Independent (148)	*	4	2.95%
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)	25	3	0.74%
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami	39	2	4.60%
Bangladesh Workers Party	5	2	0.38%
Liberal Democratic Party	18	1	0.27%
Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP)	12	1	0.26%

Note: *Information not available
Source: Bangladesh Election Commission Data

In 2008 elections followed by a couple of years of military backed caretaker government, the Jamaat could not however repeat its good performance of 1991 or 2001 and only managed to get 2 seats and a mere 4.60 per cent votes (just a marginal increase of 0.32 per cent votes) despite the fact that it contested 39 seats, 8 seats more than the number of seats it contested in 2001 elections (see Tables 5.6 and 5.7).

On 5 January 2014, parliamentary elections were held in Bangladesh with the 18-party Opposition alliance that included BNP and Jamaat boycotting it. The opposition described the election as 'token' as well as 'farce', 'sham' and

[105] Ibid.

'illegitimate'.[106] Those parties who had participated in the elections had already won 153 uncontested seats while elections were held only for 147 seats.[107] However, the voter turnout seems to be over 50 per cent even if less than half of the seats went to the polls (See Table 5.8).

Table 5.8
Details of votes in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 2014

Total Votes Registered	Total Votes Cast	Total Voter Turn Out	Total Valid Votes	Total Invalid Votes
92,007,113	47,262,168	51.36%	45,710,583	1,551,585

Source: http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2436/ accessed on 03/03/2014

Although voter turnout was much lower than 87 per cent in the last elections in 2008,[108] the 2014 figure is much higher than a very low turnout of 21 per cent in the election of February 1996 when the Awami League led opposition boycotted it,[109] resulting into BNP winning all the 300 seats.[110] The boycotted election of February 1996 was followed by another election in June 1996. Given the one-sided election of 2014, where the opposition has boycotted (See Table 5.9), the seats and vote share of the ruling alliance is not as important as the figure of voter turnout. More than 50 per cent voters turnout in 2014 for only 147 seats mean that a slim majority of the Bangladeshi population has expressed their voting right even on a violent poll day with at least 21 persons getting killed[111] and 440 polling stations being closed for security concerns.[112] I am aware that at this moment, due to unavailability of official Bangladesh election commission data on voter turnout, seats contested, and seats won in the 2014 Bangladesh parliament elections, I have to rely on whatever available data from other sources.

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106 Devadeep Purohit, 'Bangladesh holds "shunned" polls', Front page story, *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), 6 January 2014.

107 Ibid.

108 Ellen Barry, 'Low Turnout in Bangladesh Elections amid Boycott and Violence', *The New York Times*, 6 January 2014.

109 Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz, Christof Hartmann, *Elections in Asia and the Pacific: A Data Handbook*, Volume I: Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 525.

110 Ibid, p. 537.

111 Purohit, 'Bangladesh holds "shunned" polls', *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), 6 January 2014.

112 Barry, 'Low Turnout in Bangladesh Elections amid Boycott and Violence', *The New York Times*, 6 January 2014.

Table 5.9
Performance of major political parties in Bangladesh parliamentary elections, 2014 (total seats: 300)

Parties	Uncontested Win	Total Seats Won	Vote Share
Bangladesh Awami League	127	233	79.13%
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	Boycotted	Boycotted	Boycotted
Jatiya Party (JP)	20	34	11.30%
Independents	0	13	*
Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD)	3	5	1.74%
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami	Boycotted	Boycotted	Boycotted
Bangladesh Workers Party	2	6	2.05%
Liberal Democratic Party	*	0	*
Others	*	4	*
Jatiya Party (Manju)	1	2	0.30%
Bangladesh Tarikat Federation	*	2	0.30%
Bangladesh Nationalist Front	*	1	0.30%
Total	153	147	

Note: *Information not available. Vote share calculated on the basis of total valid votes and not total votes cast.
Source: Computed from *Daily Star (Dhaka)*, 06 January 2014 and http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/2436.

Economic activities in Bangladesh were also severely affected between July 2013 and January 2014 when the country lost 55 man days due to hartals/blockade/strikes by the BNP–Jammat-led opposition hitting the streets to demand for stepping down of the Awami League government and hold polls under a caretaker government.[113] Such political unrest, often marked by violence perpetrated by the combined opposition parties have particularly hit 'the land transport (rail and road) sub-sector incurred the highest amount of loss (Tk. 16,688.65 crore), followed by the agriculture and agro-based industries (Tk. 15,829 crore), export-oriented clothing and textiles (Tk. 13,750 crore) and tourism (Tk. 2,750 crore) sector'

[113] Devadeep Purohit, 'Economy toll on Bangla', *The Telegraph* (Reporting from Dhaka), 4 February 2014.

as per the latest report of a leading think tank of Bangladesh.[114] According to the same report, 'the total amount of loss is estimated to be Tk. 49,017.92 crore which is equivalent to 4.7 per cent of the GDP (FY 2012–13)' apart from hitting the small production and businesses.[115] It is possible that the voter turnout of over 50 per cent in an election that was boycotted and characterized by token contest in only 147 seats out of 300, is a reflection of the silent protest by the Bangladeshi people against such political disorder. In my field interviews with many common people in both urban and rural Bangladesh, I got the sense that the people favour a stable government with less political disruption. Since the people did not listen to the opposition call of boycotting the parliamentary election, the major opposition parties like BNP and Jamaat had to consider and participate in the Upazila (Sub-district) local elections (rural polls for local self governments) after rethinking their earlier stance of boycotting elections. Moreover, India's recognition of Awami League's victory in the boycotted general elections[116] along with subsequent support by two permanent members of the UN Security Council – Russia and China – towards India's position on the Bangladesh elections,[117] while ignoring the 'disappointment' of United States over such a boycotted election,[118] have also probably made an impact on the Bangladesh opposition parties, not to further boycott the local elections and instead participate in it. Emeritus Professor Anisuzzaman, a noted political commentator in a recent interview has pointed out that important western powers including the United States and the European Union (EU) have continued their diplomatic and economic relations with Dhaka even after the 2014 January parliamentary polls. In fact, the EU has recently declared to financially help Bangladesh. Such declarations not only strengthen the Bangladeshi government but it also came during a relatively peaceful situation in the country as compared to late 2013 and early 2014. In an overall analysis, Anisuzzaman maintains that although none can question the legal basis of the current Bangladeshi government, one can certainly raise a moral question on such a government which was formed after a parliamentary election that was boycotted

[114] *Analytical Review of Bangladesh's Macroeconomic Performance in Fiscal Year 2014 (Second Reading)* (Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue, 2014), p. 13.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Devadeep Purohit and Charu Sudan Kasturi, 'For Hasina, India swims against tide—Delhi stands by ally despite "sham" polls', *The Telegraph* (Kolkata), 7 January 2014.

[117] Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, 'China and Russia back India on supporting Sheikh Hasina government', *The Economic Times*, 16 January 2014.

[118] Marie Harf (Deputy Department Spokesperson, Office of the Spokesperson, U. S. Department of State), 'Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh' (Press Statement: Washington DC), 6 January 2014 (available at http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/01/219331.htm accessed on 11 March 2014).

by the opposition and was not conducted under the vigilance of a non-partisan caretaker government (*Anandabazar Patrika*, Kolkata, 20 August 2014).

It is absolutely possible that many people who have voted for the Awami League in 2014 parliamentary elections were actually not Awami supporters, but they voted for the ruling party because they did not have any other choice when the opposition boycotted the election. This is because in the first five phases of Upazila Parishad elections held in February and March 2014, both the BNP and the Jamaat got significant number of seats. The Jamaat emerged as the third largest party after Awami and BNP by overtaking the Jatiya Party. Out of 467 Upazila elections held till 31 March 2014, BNP has won 157 chairman posts, the Jamaat got 35 chairman posts, the ruling Awami League bagged 225 chairman posts and the Jatiya Party got just 3 chairman posts.[119] Such a performance of Jamaat was possible despite its registration being revoked by the Election Commission and even after being openly denounced by the ruling alliance as religious extremists, who are often engaged in terror and political violence.[120] The Jamaat's result in the Upazila elections was 'unexpected' and 'disturbing' for many civil society activists.[121] Even before the last phase of 14 more Upazila elections scheduled on 19 May 2014,[122] it was absolutely clear that the Jamaat has emerged as the third largest party in the current Bangladeshi politics by relegating Ershad's Jatiyo Party into fourth position in the Upazila polls. The parliamentary elections give a more holistic picture for analyzing the countrywide support of Jamaat in both rural and urban settings. In contrast, the Upazila elections only give a glimpse of rural support base. Moreover, local elections do not clearly reflect the ideological orientations of the people's mandate because of the involvement of local factors and the non-party nature of the polls. Nonetheless, the performance of Jamaat in 2014 Upazila Parishad elections clearly indicate that it still has significant organizational strength and support in Bangladesh. This being said, it is also true that the Jamaat has been so far unable to emerge as the principal opposition party in Bangladesh as one can notice from various electoral results in the last three decades.

If one analyzes the Jamaat's victory of 2001 elections and its defeat in 2008 elections not in terms of seat share but in terms of vote share, then it is nominal. However, it is difficult to compare the vote share of Jamaat in 2001 and 2008 with 1996 election since it only contested 31 and 39 seats, respectively, in 2001

[119] Farid Hossain, 'Uz Polls: Winners are Losers', *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), 2 April 2014.

[120] Mizanur Rahman Shelley, 'Unique significance of upazila elections', *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), 8 March, 2014.

[121] Badiul Alam Majumder, 'First round of upazila elections: An appraisal', *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), 21 February 2014.

[122] '6th phase UZ polls May 19', *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), 16 April 2014.

and 2008, compared with 300 seats in 1996. Given the available data from Bangladesh Election Commission, it is difficult to calculate the national vote share of Jamaat in 2001 and 2008 because one cannot possibly tell the exact percentage of Jamaat votes available in other constituencies, where it had not contested. It is likely that those Jamaat votes have gone towards its electoral alliance partner, BNP. A couple of Jamaat leaders in fact told me during the field interviews that according to their assessment, the Jamaat has a national vote share of 10–12 per cent. In fact they have been unable to cross 12 per cent votes that they got in the 1991 election. Overall, they don't have more than 12 per cent votes, which means they are not growing as an organization. It is evident that the Jamaat has not grown as an organization in Bangladesh since 1991 as its vote share has either declined from 1991 or at best stagnated since 1991. Even in seat share terms, the Jamaat has not been able to repeat its 1991 performance, let alone doing better than 1991. This evidence shows the crisis of political mobilization that the Jamaat is facing today. However, it is evident from comparing the 1996 election data with 2001 and 2008 data that after the election debacle of Jamaat with receding vote and seat share from 1991 to 1996, it has restricted itself only to those constituencies, where they have a relatively better electoral and organizational strength. This is where I would go back again to the fall in vote share of Jamaat from 1991 to 1996 and reiterate the argument that the crisis of electoral mobilization behind Jamaat started from 1996, with a declining vote and seat share or at best being electorally stagnant. The 1996 election debacle actually compelled the Jamaat to come to terms with BNP while having a tactical electoral understanding in 2001 and 2008 with not more than filing 13 per cent of its total candidates that it contested in 1996.

From the available election data, one can possibly argue that the Islamist project of Jamaat was in crisis right from the mid-1990s onwards with the *decline of vote share* in all elections after 1991 although with the logic of the first past the post-electoral system, it had performed better in 2001 than 1996 in terms of 'seats won' but falls short of the 1991 performance. Also, the Jamaat got richer electoral dividends in terms of winning more seats in parliamentary elections when they are in opposition and is detached from any direct link with the ruling power bloc. However, the logic of first past the post-system of electoral democracy, in fact erroneously, makes us focus on the category of 'seats won' than 'votes won'. This fallacy only confused some commentators and the 2001 Bangladesh election, in fact, puzzled a number of political analysts to such an extent that some of them had wrongfully portrayed the electoral verdict as the emergence of 'Islamist Taliban state', rise of 'conservative ascendancy', 'Islamist militancy' and 'Islamic terrorism'

in Bangladesh.[123] An expert argues that most reports about Bangladesh becoming another or next 'Afghanistan' or Bangladeshi Islamist groups developing links with Pakistani ISI and international terrorist organizations have come from the Indian news media and South Asia Terrorism Portal, a frontal organization of Indian intelligence agencies.[124] Certainly, the political analysis projecting Bangladesh as a 'new Islamist state' after 2001 election has not taken into account either the declining vote share or politico-electoral stagnancy of Jamaat in successive elections or its inability to repeat or better its best ever electoral performance of 1991.

Even after such an electoral crisis in recent times, the Jamaat has so far remained as a key player in Bangladeshi mainstream politics. In that sense, it is interesting to note that the same Jamaat-e-Islami, which was banned for being opposed to the creation of Bangladesh, started to have a consistent electoral presence in the Parliament right from the 1979 election, first under the banner of the Islamic Democratic League and from the 1986 election onwards, with its own banner of Jamaat-e-Islami. This emergence of Jamaat in the mainstream politics of Bangladesh is a result of the legitimization of the party by successive military establishments as I have discussed in the previous chapter.

However, from the 1980s onwards, the Jamaat also tried to relegitimize itself by often aligning with mainstream secular–nationalist parties. First, it joined hands with the secular–nationalist opposition against Ershad in late 1980s and, then, it gave outside support to BNP to form the government in 1991. During early 1990s, the Jamaat briefly formed a political alliance with its 'arch-enemy', the Awami League and Ershad's Jatiyo Party (National Party) against the BNP government.[125] Then, in 2001, it again realigned with BNP in a pre-poll electoral alliance and this alliance between Jamaat and BNP has been so far continuing till date. So, an expert has rightly pointed out that the Jamaat's political struggle since its re-emergence in early 1980s has primarily focussed through 'shifting political alliances, to relegitimize itself in the new political context of post-independence Bangladesh'.[126]

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[123] See Hiranmay Karlekar, *Bangladesh, the Next Afghanistan?* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005); Ali Riaz, *God Willing: The Politics of Islamism in Bangladesh* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004); Sumit Ganguly, 'The Rise of Islamist Militancy in Bangladesh', *United States Institute of Peace: Special Report*, No. 171 (August 2006); Partha S. Ghosh, 'Conservative Ascendancy in Bangladesh,' *South Asian Survey*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2005), pp 247–265; Satish Kumar, 'How Did Bangladesh Become an Epicentre of Islamic Terrorism,' *Peace and Conflict*, Vol. 8, No. 5 (May 2005), pp 6–7.

[124] Mumtaz Ahmad, 'Islam, State, and Society in Bangladesh', in John L. Esposito, John O. Voll and Osman Bakar, eds. *Asian Islam in the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 75.

[125] Ibid, p. 62; Mahmud, 'Jamaat's Debacles', *Outlook Magazine*, 3 July 1996.

[126] Ahmad, 'Islam, State, and Society in Bangladesh', p. 62.

However, there are some other important features in the success of Jamaat in its electoral career in Bangladesh. Firstly, it has been able to at least become a key player in the electoral politics of Bangladesh even after its stigmatized past. Secondly, even after its electoral debacles, it has always been the major spokesman of 'Islamic conservatism' in socio-religious matters and its intense politico-ideological battles against secular liberalism in Bangladesh.[127] Thirdly, it has been instrumental in at least having the symbolic presence of Islamic religion in Bangladeshi politics. In other words, due to its consistent usage of Islamic vocabulary and rhetoric, even mainstream parties cannot afford to ignore the religious significance of Islam in everyday Bangladeshi politics and makes symbolic gestures to prove their loyalty towards Islamic religion. On the other hand, the failure of Jamaat lies in the fact that it has been unable to become an electorally dominant party in Bangladesh with significant political influence, leave aside its failure to establish a model Islamic state in Bangladesh.

The question arises whether Jamaat's performance relies mainly on its stated politico-ideological perspectives, its economic policies, its vision of an Islamic state, its anti-Westernism or it just depends on the tactical electoral alliances with major political parties in Bangladesh. In this respect, a Jamaat leader, who sits in the national headquarters of Bangladesh Jamaat, told me in a brief field interview that both ideological positions and electoral alliances with some Islamic parties and BNP are major reasons for electoral success in 2001 elections.[128] He further states that ideological assertions are needed to keep intact the core Islamist constituency of Jamaat, who thinks that 'Islam is a complete way of life, and an ideal Islamic state is needed for good life of all citizens of Bangladesh'.[129] However, he further states that to rally other sections of the population, electoral alliances with a few Islamic parties and BNP are necessary.[130] Thus, it is clear that the limited electoral success that Jamaat got was due to its ideological assertions and tactical electoral alliances apart from its selective oppositions against the ruling power bloc.

However, does electoral data actually tell everything about the success and failure of an Islamist project or is it better to complement the election analysis with broader *political discourses* in a particular context? This is the task that I shall take in the next subsection of this chapter.

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[127] Ibid.

[128] Interview with Najmul Haque on 16 February 2009.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

Crisis of Islamist populism in Bangladesh

In the last subsection, it was discussed that, at present, the Jamaat is going through a crisis of political mobilization and organizational stagnancy that gets reflected in its recent electoral debacle from 2008 onwards. Firstly, the crisis of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh is not merely an electoral one as I have shown in the last section of this chapter. In fact, electoral crisis and organizational stagnancy are only symptoms of a much deeper crisis in terms of Jamaat's inability to invent a new politico-ideological articulation. Secondly, as we have seen previously, Jamaat always fairs better in political mobilization, when it is in the opposition than when it enjoys political power. Thirdly, not only has it been unable to establish its cherished goal of an 'Islamic welfare state', it is now facing an enormous challenge from the new secularist consolidation comprising the Awami League, the much skewed Bangladeshi Left and liberal progressive intelligentsia.

The fragmentation of electoral politics of Bangladesh was noticed in successive elections from late 1970s onwards with no party ever getting more than 50 per cent votes except in the 1973 election. However, in the 2008 general election, the Awami League had a thumping majority with high-voting percentage, close to 50 per cent votes. The high percentage of votes in Awami League's kitty, followed by its renewed assertion for booking alleged war criminals of 1971 and its reaffirmation of 'secularism' as a principle in the Bangladeshi constitution, signifies a political swing in Bangladeshi politics in favour of secular politics and the changing political discourse in Bangladesh. On 4 October 2010, a historic verdict of the High Court in Bangladesh stated that 'secularism' is one of the four principles of the 1972 Bangladesh constitution and the 'military rulers had illegally damaged the constitution of 1972 through martial law regulations, which are not recognised now' (*The Daily Star*, 'Secularism Back', Dhaka, 5 October 2010). In the backdrop of a renewed struggle for secular hegemony, Islamism in Bangladesh is facing a crisis of popular mobilization, both during elections and its inability to launch massive protest demonstrations against Awami League's policies of secularization. So, Bangladeshi Jamaat today faces a dual crisis: (a) a crisis of electoral mobilization and (b) a crisis of political mobilization behind its Islamist and anti-secularist agenda.

In 2008, the Jamaat was in fact, defending its government in the election. It was no more an oppositional force as it was before 1991 or before the 2001 election. In 2008 elections, a Jamaat intellectual was putting the blame on the lack of free and fair elections by claiming how the media and the caretaker government were in favour of the Awami League. He also argued how the corruption of BNP, the ideological legacy of Awami League and the maturity of Awami, in denying tickets to corrupt politicians unlike BNP, were major reasons behind the big

electoral win of the Awami League.[131] He was also arguing how the Bangladeshi people have short memory and how it looks at the performance of the incumbent government than the previous government. Safiuddin Sheikh, a Jamaat member and a Mathematics teacher in the Government Madrasa Aliya (Dhaka) also argues on same lines about unfair elections while blaming the poll officials:

> 'Jamaat's vote share in 2008 election is almost same as 2001. It has not gone down. Basically, there was no free and fair election with large-scale manipulation by the presiding officers and administrative officials in conducting, counting and reporting the number of votes. However, BNP's corruption was also an issue'.[132]

In my field interviews, there was complete absence of introspection from Jamaat leadership on the 2008 elections. They were rather putting the blame on someone other than accepting political and tactical mistakes on their part. The only exception was Md Kamruzzaman (Senior Assistant Secretary General of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami and member of *Majlis-e-Shoora*). In a draft election review document, he argued that corruption, nepotism and favouritism of the BNP members in the BNP–Jamaat government and the government's inability to fulfil the genuine and legitimate aspirations of the people like combating inflation, terrorism and electricity problem are some of the major reasons behind the defeat of the BNP–Jamaat alliance in 2008 election.[133] Therefore, in 2008, the Jamaat was more identified as a part of the corrupt and inefficient power bloc and, thus, lost its credibility as a voice of the plebs/people. Thus, as a part of the power bloc, pursuing the same set of neoliberal economic policies without resolving fundamental problems of the people has delegitimized and discredited the Jamaat as a representative of the plebs. In this respect, the gap between the Jamaat as the 'representative' of the 'people' and the 'people' as '(un)represented' widened when the democratic demands of the people (primarily addressing the question of poverty, inequality, inflation, governmental corruption and employment)[134] could not be fulfilled by the Jamaat. Moreover,

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[131] Field interview with Professor Omar Faruq, Department of Islamic History and Culture, Dhaka University on 3 June 2009. See Appendix 37.

[132] Field interview with Jamaat member Safiuddin Sheikh on 4 June 2009.

[133] *Jatiyo Nirbachone Chardoliyo Joter Biporjoyer Karon*, 2008 (Causes of Debacle for Four Party Alliance in 2008 National Election) collected on 22 February 2009.

[134] Badruddin Umar, a noted political commentator in Bangladesh informed me in a field interview that the basic issues of Bangladeshi people are poverty, inequality, inflation, government's corruption and unemployment. Interview taken on 13 February 2009. Similar views were expressed by Bangladesh Left leaders like Rashed Khan Menon of Bangladesh Workers Party and Mujahidul Islam Selim of Communist Party of Bangladesh on 14 February 2009 in my field interviews.

unlike the anti-military mobilizations of the late 1980s, the Jamaat could not launch a similar protest movement during the rule of the 2006–08 military backed caretaker government and, thus, failed to mobilize people against a visible antagonistic frontier. Thus, its project of Islamist populism could not articulate a protest discourse that had been so instrumental in its politico-ideological articulations in the late 1980s.

The crisis of Islamism in Bangladesh, which was first noticed as an electoral symptom in the 1996 election has deepened after the rout of Islamists in the last parliamentary elections of 2008 and with the current offensive of the new Awami League government against Jamaat on war crime issue. Already, the senior leadership of Bangladesh Jamaat, comprising of Delwar Hossain Sayedee, Md. Kamaruzzaman and Abul Kalam Azad, has been found guilty and sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal [ICT], while Ghulam Azam, who died on 23 October 2014 (*Dhaka Tribune*, 24 October 2014) had been previously served with 90 years jail sentence (*Dhaka Tribune*, 16 July 2013). Later, the Supreme Court commuted the death sentence of Sayedee to imprisonment till death (*The Daily Star*, 18 September 2014). Similarly, senior Jamaat leader, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed had been given a death sentence by the war crimes tribunal while five more Jamaat leaders and two BNP leaders are under trial for 1971 war crimes (*Reuters*, 17 July 2013). On 12 December 2013, senior Jamaat leader, Abdul Quader Mollah was executed for being convicted of atrocities like murders committed during the 1971 Bangladesh war of liberation (*BBC*, 12 December 2013). The ICT has also delivered death sentence for Jamaat leader, Mir Quasem Ali (*The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 2 November, 2014) and the chief of Bangladesh Jamaat, Motiur Rahman Nizami (*The Daily Star,* Dhaka, 30 October, 2014). The current Bangladesh Law Minister, Anisul Huq has stated that the 'trial of any organisation involved in war crimes is inevitable to fulfill the expectation and desire of the countrymen' hinting at the 'holding (of) the trial of Jamaat-e-Islami and its punishment for its crimes against humanity' (*The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 7 August 2014). A Jamaat member was defensive on the organization's anti-Liberation image apart from admitting a leadership crisis.[135] Also, Jamaat became defensive of the issue of war criminals after the Shahbagh protests in early 2013 that demanded death penalty for Abdul Quader Mollah (*The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 6 February, 2013). By 2009, I already noticed in my field interviews that the Jamaat had a strategic dilemma regarding the war crimes issue—whether to make an offensive attack against the government by ignoring the allegations of anti-patriotism and betrayal from 'corrupt regimes' like Awami League or to 'confess' their 'political mistake' by issuing a public apology addressing the nation.[136] Corruption charges against

[135] Field interview with Safiuddin Sheikh on 4 June 2009. See Appendix 38.

[136] Field interview with Prof Choudhury Mahmood Hasan on 4 June 2009.

Jamaat leadership[137] and finally found guilty of corruption[138] have also tarnished their image. These corruption scandals have the potentiality to discredit the honest puritan Islamic image of Jamaat which might further deepen the crisis of Islamist politics in Bangladesh. The crisis of Jamaat has further deepened after the Dhaka High Court has given the verdict in favour of cancelling Jamaat's registration with the Election Commission (*The Times of India*, 1 August 2013).

It is also interesting to note in my field interviews that the Jamaati Islamists in Bangladesh are retreating from their previous non-secular position and trying to accommodate both linguistic and nationality questions. In the case of Bangladesh, both nationality and linguistic questions were converged during the Bangladesh liberation movement, which was anchored around the idea of Bengali nationalism. The Jamaati Islamists are now saying that they were also part of the Bengali language movement, Bangladesh liberation movement, etc. In fact, they have now changed their name from Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh to Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami. All these may be tactical ways or just cosmetic changes to clean up their image, but it also reflects the crisis of the Islamists; because beyond a point, people are hardly attracted to their Islamic appeal. This crisis of Islamists has been recently seen in a series of elections also. Therefore, the call for a non-secular alternative in Bangladesh and the identification of the people with the Islamist political project is in crisis. Such a crisis situation only exposes the limits of Islamism that is unable to become a dominant ideological discourse in Bangladesh in the wake of possibilities of the emergence of a new secular political formation.

The current crisis of Jamaat has been also deepened in the wake of the Bangladesh government's initiative to ban religious political parties (*The Daily Star*, Dhaka, 15 March, 2014). How will the Jamaat tackle this current crisis and will the Jamaat be able to provide a counter-hegemonic politics in Bangladesh in the near future remain important questions to ask. It seems that the Bangladesh Jamaat seeks to tackle its present crisis by strong anti-India rhetoric and trying to portray the Awami League as the client/puppet government of both India and the US. It has already heightened its anti-India rhetoric in the wake of Tipaimukh dam project in northern Indo-Bangladesh border.[139] Jamaat leadership also thinks that there is a significant anti-India audience in Bangladesh, and its major target is to appeal to that audience.[140]

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[137] See Reuters news report: http://in.reuters.com/article/2008/05/15/idINIndia-33591720080515 accessed on 25 September 2011. Also see BBC news report: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7407665.stm accessed on 25 September 2011.

[138] Anwar Ali, 'Nizami found guilty of Tk 35cr misuse', *The Daily Star* (Dhaka), 10 June 2009.

[139] 'Jamaat for steps to stop Tipaimukh Dam building', *The Financial Express* (Dhaka), 22 May 2009.

[140] Field interview with ex-Jamaat President Ghulam Azam in Dhaka on 12 February 2009.

Such anti-Indian sentiments in Bangladesh are not new as it was witnessed during the last days of Mujib regime and during early 1980s under Zia's regime. Some commentators claim that such anti-India sentiment was a result of Bangladesh's close cooperation with the business interests and political establishment of India.[141] An intellectual of Bangladesh Jamaat thinks that since BNP is a loosely confederated party without any core ideological foundation, it is reliant on the individual charisma of Begum Khaleda Zia. Thus, after Khaleda, BNP would be weak, disorganized or even become fragmented, and Jamaat can rally a major section of BNP support base on an anti-India plank.[142] Secondly, the same person also thinks that the Jamaat should resolve the 1971 war crime issue by openly declaring that it had committed a political mistake at that time in the wake of military threat from 'Hindu India'. According to him, such an honest confession would only help to rebuild Jamaat's tarnished image as 'traitors' of Bangladesh liberation movement.[143] Besides Jamaat's politico-ideological crisis, it is also undergoing a crisis of organizational and intellectual leadership.[144] The 2008 Parliamentary elections had a devastating impact on Jamaat intellectuals, who admitted about Jamaat's organizational weaknesses.[145]

In 2008, just before the Bangladesh elections, when I was doing fieldwork in India, a senior leader of Indian Jamaat, Maulana Shafi Moonis, was hopeful of the Islamist political project in Bangladesh than in Pakistan. He pointed out that the presence of feudal *zamindari* class in Pakistan is a hindrance to such an Islamist project since it is attracted to various 'un-Islamic pleasures'. In contrast, such a class is absent in Bangladesh.[146] Here, it should be noted that he points out a strategic reason for long-term political project of Islamic state in Bangladesh than merely talking about electoral outcomes.

Whether the Jamaat would be able to resolve its ideological and electoral crisis in recent future or whether it would be able to create an Islamic state in Bangladesh in the long run is a question that history will eventually tell us. For now, let us move towards the next chapter in which I will try to make a comparative overview of the ideological articulations of JIH and Bangladesh Jamaat, particularly analyzing its rhetoric of 'Islamic alternative' that has been discussed in the last four chapters.

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141 Rahman and Hasan, *Iron Bars of Freedom*, pp 105–135; Franda, *Bangladesh*, p. 326.

142 Field interview with Professor Choudhury Mahmood Hasan on 4 June 2009. See Appendix 39.

143 Ibid.

144 Field interview with A. T. M. Fazlul Haque on 2 June 2009. See Appendix 40.

145 Field interview with Prof Omar Faruq on 3 June 2009. See Appendix 41.

146 Field interview with senior JIH leader Shafi Moonis on 01 December 2008. See Appendix 42.

6

Islamism in Contemporary India and Bangladesh

Comparative Overview of the Politics of Alternative

In the previous four chapters, I have made an overview of the politico-ideological articulations of the Islamist party, the Jamaat-e-Islami, in two different contexts of contemporary India and Bangladesh. In this chapter, I intend to make a comparative analysis on the basis of the narrative in the previous chapters. In Bangladesh, the politico-ideological articulations of Jamaat are both linked to the historical and contemporary experiences of the Bangladesh Jamaat. In India, in contrast, nobody in the political realm was concerned about what Jamaat-e-Islami actually said or did in the past. This is surely related to the dominance of *Hindutva* majoritarianism than Muslim sectarianism in India. Since JIH is a much smaller organization when compared to *Hindutva* organizations in India, Islamism in a minority context of India has a much lesser presence in the contemporary political and historical discourses of India than *Hindutva*. However, even in contemporary Bangladesh, the role of Jamaat before the creation of Bangladesh or during the Bangladesh Liberation war is often put into scrutiny. Not ignoring such specific historical contexts, nonetheless, this book is written from the vantage point of contemporary India and Bangladesh, where neoliberalism is the ruling philosophy in governmental affairs of both the countries. In the previous four chapters, I have demonstrated how the Jamaat has responded to neoliberalism in two different contexts of India and Bangladesh. Let me now comparatively analyze the similarities and differences of Jamaat's responses to neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh and account for possible reasons behind such responses.

Islamism encounters neoliberalism: Contrasting Indo-Bangladesh experiences

The fundamental differences between contemporary Islamism and *Hindutva* brand of communal–fascism in South Asia is that Islamism has an anti-imperialist and anti-consumerist character, whereas *Hindutva* genuflects at imperialism with a pro-neoliberal, pro-imperialist, pro-consumerist and elitist tendency as observed by Patnaik.[1] I further add that Islamists in India have a subaltern character and is responding to threats of economic and cultural globalization.

JIH sees the 'Islamic Economic System' as a fundamental solution or 'the only alternative which ensures justice'[2] to the gross economic injustices of our times rooted in the nature of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. Such an imagined 'just order' anticipated by the Islamists is being called 'Islamutopia', a utopia which 'opens up the possibility of hope at the most profound level of human imagination' by transcending the mundane human order.[3] The various narratives of 'Islamic alternative' articulated by JIH were noticed in Chapters 2 and 3. It's Policy and Programme, 2007–11 states that it is opposed to 'globalization', 'anti-labour legislation' and 'government's anti-people' policies like 'foreign direct investment', 'special economic zones', 'abolition of subsidies and privatization of health care, education and other services'.[4] In this context, one can ask why Islamist rhetoric is so poised against capitalist globalization. Can we argue that Islamism is a refracted form of anger of victimhood against capitalist globalization? Žižek would probably agree on this point since he argues that after the revolutions of 1789 and 1792 in France and the February and October revolutions of 1917 in Russia, the Maoist rebellion in China and fascism in the West, when our contemporary time has exhausted, its potentiality of a 'global rage', Islam represents 'the rage of the victims of capitalist globalization' along with some other forms of 'global resentments' like 'irrational outbursts by youth', 'Latin American populism, ecologists, anti-consumerists and other forms of anti-globalist resentment'.[5]

The qualitative data gathered from Jamaat's organizational literature, field interviews of Jamaat leadership, Jamaat documents, VCDs and the election data give two fundamentally different versions of Islamism in India and Bangladesh. Islamism in a Muslim minority context with a socio-economically backward and politically marginalized constituency in India is radically different from

1 Patnaik, 'Of Finance and Fascism'.

2 *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 19.

3 Adib-Moghaddam, *A Metahistory of the Clash of Civilisations*, p. 264.

4 *JIH Policy and Programme*, p. 19.

5 Slavoj Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (London: Profile Books, 2008), p. 159.

Bangladesh where Muslims are more class stratified and are more heterogeneous in economic terms. In Bangladesh, the Islamists have very different issues of concern unlike India, where Muslims are a subaltern group with an overwhelming concentration in the country's poor and working population. This varied socio-economic and political contexts of India and Bangladesh vis-à-vis Indian Muslims and Bangladeshi Muslims (the core constituency of Jamaat) not only affects the shaping up of distinct ideological articulations but also reflected in the political practice of Jamaat in two very different situations, particularly with reference to *identification of the enemy/antagonistic frontier* and *tactics of political mobilization*. For example, Islamism as a 'totalistic ideology' is threatened by the incursions and challenge of Western ideologies like secularism, liberalism and socialism in Bangladesh, where it also identifies those as 'enemy ideologies'. As a logical corollary to the above theoretical justification by the Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, it also identifies the secular and Leftwing political forces as their prime enemy.

By contrast, in India, one can notice that recently, the Jamaat has been softer towards secular–democratic and Left parties. This is precisely because of the identification of two very different political enemies by Jamaat in two varied contexts of India and Bangladesh. The Indian Jamaat identifies 'communalism' or 'communal fascism' in the form of *Hindutva* and 'imperialism' in the form of 'American hegemony', 'neoliberal economic policies', 'corporate globalization', etc. as not only for enemies of Indian Muslims but also for the Indian people at large. The Bangladesh Jamaat, on the contrary, identifies the secular and Leftwing politics as their prime enemy and the economic issues related to neoliberalism and corporate globalization are almost absent in their political discourses. That is to say, while the Indian Jamaat is more critical and opposed to neoliberalism, the Bangladesh Jamaat is non-engaging, rather than having a clear stated position on this issue.

Although the Bangladeshi Jamaat is less vocal than its Indian counterpart, it emphasizes the hegemonic role of America in the field of international politics, particularly with relation to the US attitude towards Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Palestine. The Bangladeshi Jamaat has also been anxious about America's intervention in Bangladesh politics, specifically alleging that the US backed the secular Awami League in the December 2008 National Parliament election. Almost all the Jamaat leaders that I have interviewed in February 2009 and subsequently in June 2009 primarily gave the reason of 'American conspiracy' against them in the 2008 Bangladesh parliamentary elections. Although, they have internally accepted their defeat for organizational weaknesses and the alliance with a 'corrupt' BNP as mentioned in the last chapter, their public position has put the blame on an alleged 'American conspiracy' that has rigged the 2008 Bangladesh elections. They have argued that the 2008 Bangladesh elections were 'rigged' with

the help of the American establishment, local military caretaker government and the Awami League. When asked why such a case would happen only against them and not against the Awami League, the Jamaat leaders could hardly respond. In other words, the Bangladeshi Jamaat was perplexed by the electoral debacle in 2008 and, thus, took refuge in conspiracy theories. It must be noted here that conspiracy theory is 'an obscure attempt to understand the reality of sociability from the myopic perspective of a non-social political ideology'.[6] It must be noted here that conspiracy theories are generally based on esoteric epistemology.[7] It is generally believed by the powerless who have limited control in a world of uncertainties that the world is run by a single powerful world government, which may be conspiring against them. It is possible in this case that the powerless (the Jamaat leadership) identifies someone like the American government, which in a hidden or secret manner is conspiring against them.

Coming back to the Jamaat's response to neoliberalism, I argue that due to two very different approaches/attitudes towards neoliberalism, the Jamaat also has two distinct visions of 'development'. In India, the Jamaat is fiercely critical about 'corporate model of development' with big land acquisitions, FDI in the retail sector, rampant privatization and dominance of big capital, retreat of the state from major welfare activities like education and health, which directly affects the Muslim peasantry, the working classes and the petty producers. On the contrary, Bangladeshi Jamaat is favourable to big private investments in the overall 'growth' and 'development' of Bangladesh. Regarding land acquisition, the Jamaat in Bangladesh is a little concerned and, thus, demands industrialization in non-agricultural lands which is a standard argument of most of the political parties: left–right–centre in both India and Bangladesh with an agenda of peasant populism. In this case, it should be remembered that for Bangladeshi Jamaat, it is only a matter of 'where industry should be built' without questioning the corporate nature of industrialization and the corporate model of development unlike the Indian Jamaat.

This leads to an important question about the complex relationship between neoliberalism and Islamism. Under what conditions does Islamism oppose or critique neoliberalism, and under what situations does it remain mute in critiquing neoliberalism? The findings of this book lead to the conclusion that the political positions of Jamaat in two varied socio-political contexts of India and Bangladesh regarding neoliberalism are fundamentally related to two varied socio-economic

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6 Mark Featherstone, 'The Obscure Politics of Conspiracy Theory', in Jane Parish and Martin Parker, eds. *The Age of Anxiety: Conspiracy Theory and the Human Sciences* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 43.

7 Edmund Griffiths, *Towards a Science of Belief Systems* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp 85–102.

profiles of Muslims and dynamics of power bloc in these countries. In India, the overwhelming majority of Muslims is poor and is adversely affected by neoliberalism, while in Bangladesh, the Muslims are more heterogeneous in economic terms. Unlike India, there is an expanding Muslim middle class and upper class in Bangladesh. Moreover, the share of political power or becoming a part of the power bloc is never an issue for the Muslims in Bangladesh as they form the overwhelming majority of political elites in Bangladesh. That is why, the issue in Bangladesh is more of 'secularists' versus 'Islamists' and 'progressives' versus 'conservatives' in the power struggle, unlike India, where political marginalization and political (under)representation is an issue for Muslim politics. In a neoliberal consensus as a hegemonic formation in both India and Bangladesh, where resistance towards neoliberalism is weak and fragmented, the political elites who become part of the power bloc would be more favourable towards neoliberalism than the people who are adversely affected by the neoliberal phase of globalized capitalism. Since Muslims have a plebian status in India with socio-economic backwardness and political marginalization with an absence of powerful Muslim political elites, the neoliberal policies are thus opposed by a Muslim organization like Jamaat where Muslims form a subaltern group. In this respect, the friend-foe duality and construction of an antagonistic frontier in the political field is done very differently in India and Bangladesh as far as the politico-ideological articulations of Islamist politics like Jamaat are concerned.

In this respect, the identification of neoliberalism along with its political representatives of Congress and BJP as the *enemy* of the 'people' including the Muslims is an important development in the Islamist politico-ideological discourses in India. This addition of neoliberalism, Congress and BJP to the existing 'enemy' in the form of 'Western imperialism' is surely expansion of extremely visible antagonistic frontiers constructed by Islamism in India. In this respect, it fundamentally differs from the past discourses of Jamaat in pre-neoliberal India, where the Islamist discourse of Jamaat simply regard *anything* that is non-Islam or un-Islamic as '*jahiliya*' (ignorance of non-Islam) and, therefore, as an 'enemy' irrespective of whether such un-Islamic entities are abstract or concrete.

Experts argue that the ideology of Jamaat is a combination of various concepts like 'sovereignty of God', 'vicegerency (*Khilafat*) of man', 'Islamic state' and 'ignorance of non-Islam (*jahiliya*)'.[8] Besides these concepts, which are of primary importance, Maududi's Jamaat believes in 'Islamic ethics', the propagation of Islamic concept of 'social justice' as the true form of justice, the

[8] Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, pp 161–174. Also see Charles J. Adams, 'The Ideology of Mawlana Mawdudi', in Donald Eugene Smith, ed. *South Asian Politics and Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp 371–397.

establishment of an 'Islamic social system' – a conceptual and jurisdictional extension of Islamic state in societal matters where property relations, conjugal relations and the family would be guided by the moral and legal principles of Islamic law. The propagation of 'Islamic economics' as a principle of Islamic state would strive for an interest-free 'just' Islamic economic system, distinct from both capitalism and socialism. In the Islamic state, revenue generation from Islamic taxes like *zakat*,[9] the holding of private property, land relations and business transactions would be done according to the tenets and provisions of Islamic law.[10] Apart from these issues, the Jamaat is also opposed to free mixing of men and women and, thus, favours compulsory veiling (*purdah*) for women as a mechanism of social segregation and further opposes birth control as a national policy.[11] In Bangladesh, the specific political assertion of Jamaat is targeted against women, particularly in demanding compulsory adoption of veil and adherence to Islamic law in matters related to marriage and divorce.[12] Jamaat's ideology is also characterized by a strong anti-communist and anti-nationalist rhetoric including the opposition to Arab nationalism and to the US and Britain.[13] This anti-Western position of Jamaat is a logical corollary of its hostility towards any ideology or political order, other than Islam in the name of rejecting the 'ignorance of non-Islam (*jahiliya*)'.

Scholars of Islamist discourses point out that for Islamic thinkers like Maududi, four important political doctrines are of immense importance.[14] Firstly, *paganism of the world*, signifying 'ignorance of non-Islam' (*jahiliya*) should be replaced with

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9 'Zakat' is primarily an Islamic form of charity equal to 2.5 per cent of total annual income of a person who earns more than a certain limit in a given year. Generally 'zakat' is meant for giving alms to the poor, but in an Islamic state this is an important source of revenue generation for public welfare and social security funds meant for the benefit of the poor.

10 Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, pp 174–187.

11 Ibid, p. 188. The Islamist ideology of Jamaat proposes a whole set of guidelines in the realm of family matters right from the husband–wife relations, marriage and divorce, relations with parents, relatives and even matters related to sexual behaviour. See Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Purdah and the Status of Woman in Islam* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2003); Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Birth Control: Its Social, Political, Economic, Moral and Religious Aspects* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2006).

12 For a detailed analysis on the issues of marginalised and subjugated position of women in relation to Islamist assertion in Bangladesh see Taj I. Hashmi, *Women and Islam in Bangladesh: Beyond Subjection and Tyranny* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

13 Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, pp 188–193.

14 See Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Quest for Modernity, Legitimacy, and the Islamic State* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), pp 55–64.

an Islamic order. Secondly, *universalism of Islam* signifies submission of all people to God's sovereignty that encompasses every aspect of human life. This universality conceptualizes the inseparability of religion from politics and the role of Islam even in mundane everyday activities of life, like eating, sleeping, trading, etc. with proper Islamic instructions of how to function as a pious and righteous Muslim. Thus, *universalism of Islam* comprehends Islam as a totality and a complete way of life. Thirdly, the doctrine of *Islamic revolution* aims at total transformation of prevalent socio-economic and political systems of *jahiliya* (un-Islamic secular, liberal or socialist systems). For a successful *Islamic revolution*, Islamists adopt political strategies like *jihad* (struggle) and *da'wa* (propagation of or call to Islam). In this regard, there is a complementary relationship between *jihad* and *da'wa* as the former also signifies annihilation of any obstacle to *Islamic da'wa*. Finally, Islamists argue for true *justice* which would protect the weak from injustice by enjoining good and forbidding evil. Thus, for Islamists, the revolutionary role of Islam does not end with the establishment of an Islamic state but to ensure that social, legal and international justice must be realized by displacing the prevalent forms of injustices of *jahiliya* in the whole world.

Maududi's 'Islamic ideology' greatly influenced several Islamist groups in various parts of the world as it provided the first clear definition and programme of an 'Islamic state'.[15] However, experts point out that the nature of Islamist ideology is 'absolutist' and 'authoritarian'.[16] Scholars argue that the nature of Islamic state as an expression of political vision of Maududi is 'totalitarian'.[17] In fact, Maududi's own submission is that the Islamic state is 'totalitarian' and would be 'a universal and all-inclusive state. Its sphere of activity is coexistent with the whole of human life. It seeks to mould every sphere of life and activity in consonance with its peculiar moral theory and programme of reform. In such a state no one can regard his affairs as personal and private'.[18] According to Maududi, 'the basic principle of Islamic politics is that both individually and collectively human beings should surrender all rights of legislation and exercise of authority over others…[as] sovereignty belongs to God only'.[19] But to Maududi, this kind of totalitarianism is just and benevolent as it would be guided by the strictures of God's commands.[20]

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15 Reinhard Schulze, *A Modern History of the Islamic World*, trans. Azizeh Azodi (London: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), p. 118.

16 Sidahmed and Ehteshami, 'Introduction', pp 13–14.

17 Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, pp 204–206.

18 Maudoodi, *Political Theory of Islam*, pp 44–45.

19 Ibid, pp 28–29.

20 Adams, 'The Ideology of Mawlana Mawdudi', p. 390.

As an ideological, all-embracing and universal state, the Islamic state would be governed by *Sharia* (Islamic laws). In opposition to any monarchy or hereditary rule, Islamic state would follow the democratic and republican principles of the caliphate (*khalifa*)—the vicegerency, who would be directly elected by the people.[21] However, in the Islamic state, both non-Muslims and women are subjected to discrimination in matters related to political and legal rights as they can neither be elected as head of an Islamic state nor can be elected as members of the legislative assemblies, and there would be complete segregation of non-Muslims and women with that of the mainstream affairs of the Islamic political system.[22] Maududi was also a staunch critic of nationalism for he considered Islam and nationalism to be incompatible and that the latter to be divisive along the lines of nationality[23], while the ideal goal of Islam is to unite the *ummah* (international community of believers or universal brotherhood of Muslims).[24]

Today, the JIH is trying to make an equivalent articulation with other non-Muslim elements like Dalits, Tribals, Christians, etc. by taking up their cause, speaking for their democratic demands and standing in solidarity with them. Thus, a rigid explanation of '*jahiliya*' which was a characteristic of the ideological morphology of JIH even a decade back has now been reformulated. One can also notice this reformulation in connection with JIH's recent soft stance on Western political concepts like 'secularism', 'democracy', 'nationalism', etc. Therefore, '*jahiliya*' as a core concept in Islamist ideology is redefined in the recent political articulations of JIH. Thus, in theoretical terms, one can argue that the previous *decontested* concept

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21 See Maudoodi, *Political Theory of Islam*; Also see Abu-l-'Ala' Mawdudi, 'Political Theory of Islam', in John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, eds. *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, Second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp 262–270.

22 For an elaborate discussion on the issues of both women and non-Muslims in an Islamic state see Maudoodi, *Political Theory of Islam*; Abul Ala Maudoodi, *The Nature and Contents of Islamic Constitution*, edited by Khurshid Ahmad (Karachi: Jamaat-e-Islami Publications, 1959); Abul Ala Maudoodi, *The Islamic Law and Its Introduction in Pakistan*, Khurshid Ahmad, ed. (Karachi: Jamaat-e-Islami Publications, 1955). Also see Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, p. 206; Nasr, 'Mawdudi and the Jama'at-i Islami', in Rahnema, ed. *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, pp 108–110; Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, pp 168–172; Sayed Riaz Ahmad, *Islam and Modern Political Institutions in Pakistan*, pp 199–223. For specific denial of women as an elected representative in legislative assemblies, see a subsection called 'Women and Elections' in Maududi, 'The Position of Islam with regard to Women', p. 136.

23 See Abu-l-'Ala' Mawdudi, 'Nationalism and Islam', in John J. Donohue and John L. Esposito, eds. *Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives*, Second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp 74–77.

24 Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Unity of the Muslim World*, Fifth edition (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1992); Also see Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds*, p. 147.

of *jahiliya* in the ideological articulations of JIH has now been *recontested*. In both Freeden and Laclauian sense, it is now clear how the apparently *decontested* concept of *jahiliya* with an ideological *closure* has undergone a change of meaning with *inconclusivess* and *partial fixations* in the ideological articulations of JIH.

Thus, selected elements of '*jahiliya*' like Congress, BJP and neoliberal policy regime are treated as 'enemy' by the JIH, whereas secular–democratic and Left forces are regarded as possible 'allies'. Recently, there is a new trend of increasing proximity of JIH with the Left and several secular-democratic parties apart from various human rights organizations in India. Furthermore, political articulations of JIH along the lines of (secular) class issues by raising the demands of eradicating poverty and unemployment among the Muslim community and settlement of political and economic grievances of the Muslims are surely an important break from their earlier association with primarily religious, faith-based and cultural issues like Muslim personal law, banning controversial books of Rushdie and Taslima, divorce laws, minority status for universities like Aligarh and Jamia. However, the religious and faith-based issues are not put into oblivion by JIH as the recent Kerala textbook controversy has shown. Evidently, such issues are taken up by JIH as it can be seen in Chapter 3 with its staunch opposition to Taslima, homosexuality, blasphemy, atheism, etc. But surely, the addition of a new political articulation of raising the demands of economic issues like poverty and unemployment even by an organization which is largely identified as 'Muslim fundamentalist' can create conditions of possibilities for further progressive political articulations among Indian Muslims in general on several other issues.

On the contrary, the non-identification of neoliberalism as an antagonistic frontier in Islamist ideological articulations of Jamaat in Bangladesh is related to the *unavailability* of a prominent progressive political articulation and its critique of neoliberalism in the political mainstream of Bangladesh. By contrast, in India, the Jamaat is operating in the milieu of a Leftwing critique of neoliberalism both at the national level in general and Kerala in particular, where the organizational strength of Jamaat is relatively better than other states. In Kerala, Jamaat is targeting the Muslim youth with much heightened Leftwing rhetoric with slogans like 'Chavez, Nezad and Castro – carry on, we are with you' in their rallies, or speaking against special economic zones (SEZs), Walmart, Reliance, corporate globalization, 'FDI in Retail', etc. to attract certain Left-oriented Muslims, only to expect that some might join Jamaat.

In a neoliberal policy regime, where the state has withdrawn from major welfare activities in the sectors of health and education, both in India and Bangladesh, the Jamaat tries to involve in these sectors by investing on subsidized public education, health and housing projects or what they call 'the social services' of Jamaat to rescue people from material problems. In this respect, Bangladeshi Jamaat is

more professional with major investments in education (running schools, colleges, private universities and coaching centres), health (private hospitals, diagnostic centres and pharmaceutical industries), housing projects, financial sector (Islamic banks, stock markets, insurance and leasing companies), business organizations (retail, wholesale and departmental stores), communications (truck, bus, launch, steamers, ship, car, three-wheeler CNG, etc.), real estate, media (both print and electronic), information technology, books and publications, and NGOs. Such investments are only meant for profit generation out of these projects. Thus, there is a significant network of political economy of Islamism under the supervision of Jamaat in Bangladesh.[25] By contrast, JIH lacks such enormous resources and is more concentrated on literacy mission and providing subsidized facilities in education, health and housing projects to a limited extent. For such projects, JIH generally gets money from individual members, cadres and supporters who generally donate money on a monthly basis (almost like a levy), the money collected from annual *zakat* (alms) to the organization as well as from foreign expatriates, particularly from West Asia.[26]

From the discussion so far in the book, I can argue that in India, Jamaati Islamism is a protest discourse against neoliberal form of capitalism, but in Bangladesh, it is complicit towards neoliberalism and, at times, serves the interests of neoliberal capitalism. However, in both India and Bangladesh, Jamaati Islamism is at best articulating an agenda of Islamic welfare state and can be perfectly accommodated within the logic of capitalism with a system of wage labour and private ownership of major means of production. Thus, its cherished alternative of 'Islamic state' is not actually an 'alternative' to capitalism but rather has an agenda to reform capitalism with a projected human face of welfarism. Although the ideologues of Jamaat in South Asia *claim* to follow a 'middle path'[27] and oppose both capitalism and socialism[28] effectively, their agenda is not to move beyond capitalism and construct an alternative post-capitalist society. In fact, Charles Tripp has argued that the discourse of Islam often articulated by prominent Islamists is characterized by distinct economic ideas ranging from what he calls 'Islamic socialism' based on development initiatives by the state, moral economy and social harmony and solidarity, to the promotion of interest-free Islamic economics via Islamic banking

[25] Abul Barkat, 'Economics of Fundamentalism in Bangladesh', *Social Science Review*, The Dhaka University Studies, Part-D, Vol. 23, No. 2 (December 2006), pp 1–32.

[26] Interview with JIH CAC member, K. A. Siddique Hasan on 2 December 2008; JIH brochure for *Vision* 2016 collected from JIH headquarters in Delhi.

[27] Maulana Sadruddin Islahi, *The Islamic Economic Order*. Trans. Dr Abdul Moiz Manzar (Aligarh: Idara-e-Tahqeeq-o-Tasneef-e-Islami, 1985), p. 46.

[28] Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution*; Azam, *Jama'at-e-Islami*.

and *zakat* (alms/alms tax) for both social welfare and individual benefits to the ideas of 'Islamic anti-capitalism' as a form of resistance political activism.[29] Tripp further argues that the Islamic ideas to respond capitalism have been influenced by 'society', 'nation–state' and 'market economy', which are intricately linked to the historical development of capitalism and the Islamic banking is rather a successful engagement with global capital than a step towards abolition of capitalism.[30]

In this respect, Jamaat's projected Islamic welfare state accommodates the logic of welfare capitalism than the abolition of capitalism or a move towards socialism. In the mid of neoliberal hegemony or the consensus of 'market capitalism' in India and Bangladesh, a political project of Islamic welfare state can be seen as an 'alternative' to *neoliberal capitalism* rather than an 'alternative' to capitalism in general. However, such a project of Islamic welfare state in India and Bangladesh becomes extremely difficult to establish. JIH is a minority voice in the political discourse of India and also a minority within a minority ie. among the Indian Muslims. Thus, the structural constraints of a 'number game' in a representative democracy like India hinder Jamaat from creating such an Islamic welfare state. In India, the Jamaat only operates as a pressure group and places its demands like reversing neoliberal economic policies and arguing for a welfare state if not an 'Islamic' one. Such a demand of a welfare state is unlikely to be heard by the political establishment, given the current hegemony enjoyed by neoliberalism in the governmental discourse of India. If ever the neoliberal hegemony is challenged by an alternative politico-ideological articulation to be able to push hard towards the direction of a workable welfare state, then it could be only possible by a broader 'united front' of several Leftwing and democratic forces, which the Jamaat might be part of (like its support towards the Left on certain issues as it was discussed in Chapters 2 and 3), but it is unlikely that the Jamaat will be the 'vanguard' of such a struggle to create a 'welfare state' in India.

In Bangladesh, the Jamaat has so far been unable to realize an Islamic welfare state again because of the number game in a representative democracy. However, it certainly has greater influence in the political discourse of Bangladesh by being an opposition party in the parliament as compared to being a mere pressure group in the national politics of India. It should however, be remembered that when the Bangladesh Jamaat was in power from 2001–2006 for a full five-year term, it was least interested in reversing neoliberal economic policies or taking stringent measures for welfare capitalism. Despite Bangladesh Jamaat's promise to create an 'Islamic welfare state' in the successive election manifestoes of 1991, 1996 and 2001,

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[29] Charles Tripp, *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp 77–193.

[30] Ibid, pp 195 and 199.

it did not take any strident policies towards creating a 'welfare state', leave alone the question of 'Islamic welfare state', when it shared power with BNP from 2001–06. On the contrary, it pursued some aggressive neoliberal economic policies in the sectors of agriculture, social welfare and industry as it was mentioned in Chapter 5. Thus, when Islamism in Bangladesh lost its subaltern character of opposing the dominant political establishment and have found a place in institutionalized power structures like the national government, it became subservient to neoliberal capitalism. So far, I have argued that the Jamaat in India has more reservations against neoliberalism than its Bangladeshi counterpart although in both the countries, its political goal is to experience an Islamic welfare state based on private property system with major role of the state in providing social welfare like education, health, unemployment benefits, etc.

However, is there any ideological basis within the discourses of Islamic religion that made JIH to oppose neoliberalism? Firstly, Islamist theoreticians like Siddiqui argue that according to Islam, 'natural resources related to the common interests of man, such as rivers, mountains, sea, space and collective goods such as roads, bridges, etc. are not to be owned by individuals'.[31] Besides such 'natural resources' and 'collective goods', any individual, man or woman can own objects 'rightly acquired through purchase, inheritance or original possession of unowned objects'.[32] During the contemporary phase of neoliberalism, corporate takeover of natural resources like water, forests and land (popularly known as *jal*, *jungle*, *zamin*) is a reality in India. One can see in Chapters 2 and 3, how JIH has launched protests and organized local resistance movements against such corporate encroachment over what the Islamists describe as 'natural resources' and 'collective goods'. Thus, political opposition to such 'primitive accumulation' of natural resources and collective goods by corporate capital under a neoliberal policy regime has an ideological basis within the discourse of Islam(ism) itself.

Secondly, as opposed to neoliberal economics of deregulated capitalism, Islamists propose a regulated capitalism by arguing that such a model has an ideological basis within the discourse of Islam itself. Maududi argues that Islamists 'cannot establish a free economy like that of capitalistic system' nor a 'collective control over the entire economy like the communist system', but 'have to construct a free economy within certain limits and restriction'.[33] While arguing the right of individual acquisition of permissible objects in Islam, nonetheless, Siddiqui clarifies

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31 Dr. Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Islamic Economy* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2002), p. 91.

32 Ibid.

33 Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *Islamic Economic System, Principle and Objective* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2005), p. 18.

that 'the State may *regulate* such acquisition in the social interest (italics mine)'.[34] To add further, Siddiqui argues that in a modern Islamic state:

> 'Prices, wages, rates of hire and rent, and profits will normally be left to be determined by the market forces. Given the co-operative attitude and social orientation on the part of the economic agents in Islamic society, it is expected that the rates and prices so determined will be just and socially correct, giving rise to no cause for state intervention. But the state has the power to intervene and fix prices and rates when it becomes imperative to do so to protect the common man and the society from profiteering and other baneful policies of the economic agents involved. Speculative hoarding and artificially engineered monopolies are a case in point'.[35]

Thus, although Siddiqui proposes a free market economy in a modern ideal Islamic state, the apprehensions of a speculative and monopolistic economy make him argue for a regulated capitalism with state intervention in fixing prices, wages, rates of hire, rent and profit. The model of regulated capitalism is also expressed by Ghulam Azam by arguing that Islam recognizes 'private ownership' as 'controlled'[36] and 'conditional' for individuals and groups without monopolization and concentration of national wealth by few individual capitalists under capitalism, or for the party, government and state-capitalists under socialism.[37] In this respect, the ideological articulations of Jamaat as it were seen in Chapters 2 and 3 by opposing the policies of rampant privatization, monopolization and concentration of capital has an ideological chord with the discourse of Islam.

Thirdly, Islamism has an anti-consumerist tendency which is opposed to the discourse of consumerism in a neoliberal setting. In Chapters 2 and 3, one has seen such an anti-consumerist thrust of JIH. Such anti-consumerist positions of the Islamists also have an ideological basis within the discourse of Islam. An ideologue of Jamaat argues that Islam has always preferred an 'austere policy' while prioritizing the fulfilment of 'necessities' than 'comforts' and 'luxuries'.[38] Maududi argues that Islam forbids 'self-indulgence' and has put some prohibitions for men like wearing 'silk dresses', 'golden ornaments and jewels', decorating the house with 'pictures and statues'.[39] In the words of Maududi, 'Islam has closed

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34 Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Islamic Economy*, p. 91.

35 Ibid, p. 99.

36 Azam, *Jama'at-e-Islami,* p. 123.

37 Ibid, p. 133.

38 Dr Muhammad Muslehuddin, *Economics and Islam* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 1982), pp 58–59.

39 Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution*, p. 30.

all those outlets through which the greater portion of a man's wealth is spent on his own luxuries and indulgences' and prefers a 'decent life of an average standard'.[40] Since the discourses within Islam forbid 'self-indulgence', it is not surprising that the ideological articulation of Jamaati Islamism has an anti-consumerist element, which certainly does not gel well with the philosophy of consumerism in a neoliberal context. To summarize the above three points, one can argue that the Islamist opposition to the plunder of 'natural resources' and 'collective goods', its staunch support for 'regulated capitalism' and its political agenda of 'anti-consumerism' is definitely a break from the neoliberal trajectory that is characterized with 'primitive accumulation', 'unbridled market capitalism' and 'consumerism'.

Besides, critiquing and politically opposing neoliberalism, the Islamists often propose that the discourse of Islam is an 'alternative' to capitalist modernity.[41] However, the *Sharia*, which is hailed by the Islamists as the model code of conduct to run an Islamic society, law and state 'is in no way an obstacle to the practice of market relations and respect for the status of private property, both necessary for the functioning of capitalism'.[42] Maududi himself was in favour of private ownership by citing that Islam is not opposed to private property and does not make a distinction between 'means of production' and 'consumer goods'.[43] He argues that 'from the Islamic point of view, a person has the right to own land or a machine or factory just as he has the right to own clothes, utensils and furniture'.[44] He further asserts that 'if the right to private property is snatched away and collective ownership is imposed on all economic resources, individual liberty will inevitably come to an end because, after all, the members of society become the servants of the organization which controls the economic resources of the entire country'.[45] Similarly, ex-President of Bangladesh Jamaat, Ghulam Azam argues that 'ownership in itself is not responsible for exploitation' and 'capitalists can exploit only with the governmental backing'.[46] Another ideologue of Jamaat, who is internationally regarded as a specialist in 'Islamic economics' in Jamaat circles argues that Islam gives the 'right' to 'private ownership and freedom of enterprise'.[47] On the basis of Maududi's writings, the positions of JIH as expressed by Siddiqui and the founder of Bangladesh Jamaat, Ghulam Azam, are more close

40 Ibid.

41 Also see Amin, *Eurocentrsim*, p. 71.

42 Ibid.

43 Maududi, *Islamic Economic System, Principle and Objective*, p. 8.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Azam, *Jama'at-e-Islami*, p. 130.

47 Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Islamic Economy*, p. 90.

to regulated capitalism with state monitoring of the economy and having a greater role for the state in the economy with a welfarist model.

In both India and Bangladesh, the Jamaat and its ideologues are at best opposed to 'interest-based economic system' and is in favour of 'interest-free banking'[48] along with imposing prohibitions on transacting certain *haram* (unlawful/prohibited/impermissible) commodities (wine and other intoxicants) prohibiting certain professions (music, dancing, gambling, prostitution, business spreading indecency and licentiousness, business based on fraud and deceit, etc.), and practices (hoarding, bribery, cheating, speculation etc.) as prescribed by 'Islamic guidelines'.[49] According to Maududi, as a general rule, 'Islam does not permit the control of certain sectors of the economy by certain special persons or families or classes to the exclusion of all others' and 'only a monopoly which is absolutely essential for the collective good of society is allowed'.[50] In this regard, who defines the 'collective good' and how it is defined in an Islamic state is a significant question to pose, to which Maududi has no clear answer.

In this respect, an Islamist party like Jamaat could argue against neoliberalism, which is only a peculiar form of policy orientation of contemporary capitalism, but it cannot offer any concrete alternative to capitalism as such. In fact, there is discrepancy in Jamaat's theoretical critique of capitalism and the alternative of Islamic welfare state suggested by it. Thus, even if Jamaat criticizes capitalism as promoting 'monopolies', 'concentration of wealth in few hands', 'poverty' and 'economic inequalities', its adherence to private property, wage labour and its inability to suggest any alternative mode of exchange other than the circulation of money and commodities (M-C-M'), which is seen under conditions of capitalism,[51] ultimately makes it a political force that cannot promise a credible alternative to capitalism as a whole. Moreover, an Islamist party like Jamaat is unable to propose any other mode of exchange like 'gift and reciprocation',

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48 *JIH Policy and Programme, 2007–11*, p. 18; Azam, *Jama'at-e-Islami*, pp 122–123; Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Islamic Economy*, pp 71–86; Dr M. Umer Chapra, *Prohibition of Interest: Does it Make Sense?* (New Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami, 2005).

49 Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution*; Maududi, *Islamic Economic System, Principle and Objective*; Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Islamic Economy*, p. 91.

50 Maududi, *Islamic Economic System, Principle and Objective*, pp 12–13.

51 Marx has shown that capitalism sustains on wage labour and private property or private ownership of major means of production, whose mode of exchange is expressed in the circulation of money or capital and commodities (M-C-M') where M = money, C = commodity and M' = more money with hidden surplus value. For Marx, 'M-C-M' is therefore in reality the general formula of capital as it appears prima facie within the sphere of circulation'. See Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. I* (Marxists CD Archive, 2002).

which can be noticed among several agrarian communities, or 'plunder and redistribution' as a mode of exchange under feudalism, or 'mutual aid' in a possible associationist model of communist society.[52]

However, the 1996 election manifesto of Bangladesh Jamaat has argued in favour of 'land reforms' by recording land ownership, fixing land ceilings, and proposed a policy for 'cooperative farming', 'modernized farming' and 'cooperative marketing',[53] later on dropped from 2001 and 2008 election manifestos. In this respect, Jamaat ideologue, Siddiqui proposes to 'eliminate' concentration of land holdings and the Islamic state's 'power to fix a ceiling on landed property', which according to him is justified in the light of 'large feudal holdings' in the Islamic world today.[54] He argues that such feudalism in the contemporary Islamic world with large land holdings is a 'departure from Islamic policies by the Muslim states in the past'.[55] In this respect, Siddiqui's proposal is that the 'democratic procedure laid down by Islam'[56] actually wants to eliminate the economic basis of feudalism. Therefore, such a proposal to eliminate feudalism as prescribed by Islamic principles actually creates conditions for the development of capitalism.

Therefore, an Islamist group like the Jamaat cannot propose any alternative to capitalism since its political discourse is only constituted by a rhetorical critique of capitalism without a substantive proposal to alter the capitalist mode of production and without replacing the existing mode of exchange by money (M-C-M') as noticed in capitalist market economy with an alternative 'Islamic' mode of production and exchange. Furthermore, an Islamic economic system with moral prohibitions on transacting certain commodities, prohibiting certain professions and practices does not fundamentally distinguish itself from the logic of capital, although the diversity of commodities and professions in the market can be certainly squeezed due to such moral prohibitions. Even if an Islamic economic system is fundamentally opposed to an interest-based economy, it is certainly not opposed to extracting surplus value and its other different forms: namely, profit and rent.[57] In fact, both Maududi and Siddiqui point out that in Islam, both profit and rent are permissible if they are

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52 For a detailed analysis of four different modes of exchange see Kojin Karatani, *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*, trans. Sabu Kohso (London: The MIT Press, 2003), pp 276–306.

53 *Election Manifesto of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh 1996*, p. 18.

54 Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Islamic Economy*, p. 100.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Marx argues that Surplus-value 'splits up into various parts' falling to 'various categories of persons, and take various forms, independent the one of the other, such as profit, interest, merchants' profit, rent'. See Marx, *Capital Vol. I.*

acquired through just and permissible means while engaged in lawful business.[58] Thus, surplus generated through profit and rent would help to accumulate capital in an economic system marked by private property and private ownership of means of production.

Maududi suggests that Islam is opposed to 'hoarding' and 'accumulated wealth' as it prescribes to constantly put the wealth in 'circulation'.[59] However, there are no strict restrictions on such accumulation of wealth or capital as per Islamic principles, meagre 2.5 per cent per annum will be charged as *zakat* (a form of tax) on such accumulated wealth by force of law to give economic assistance to the poor and needy.[60] In fact, Maududi himself argues that one can transfer *halal* (lawful/permissible) wealth to others as a 'gift or a favour or use it for producing more wealth or leave it as inheritance for his descendants'.[61] He further argues that 'on these rightful earnings, no limitations can be put at any stage' and Islam does not stop anyone from becoming a 'millionaire' and 'does not raise unreasonable obstacles' or 'stop people from lawfully earning as much as they like'.[62] Similarly, Siddiqui argues that 'every owner has a right to use his property for earning more money through commerce, industry and agriculture' provided that he observes the Islamic 'code of conduct'.[63] Marx has incisively shown us that capitalism sustains itself through continuous accumulation and circulation of capital.[64] Thus, Islamic economic system along with its system of private property gives scope to both accumulation and circulation of capital with surplus wealth in private hands, generated through profit and rent. This is an important limit of Islamism, where it is unable to give an alternative to any given mode of production and exchange in general and capitalism in particular. Moreover, it does not propose any alternative method to break the chain of accumulation and circulation of capital or put an end to the extraction of surplus value and the continuous reproduction of surplus value in various forms like profit and rent. In such a situation, the call for an Islamic state only becomes a political agenda to make changes in the existing laws and governance by Sharia rule without changing the capitalist mode of production

58 Maududi, *Islamic Economic System, Principle and Objective*, pp 20–21; Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Islamic Economy*, p. 95 and 99.

59 Maududi, *The Economic Problem of Man and its Islamic Solution*; Maududi, *Islamic Economic System, Principle and Objective*.

60 Ibid.

61 Maududi, *Islamic Economic System, Principle and Objective*, p. 11.

62 Ibid.

63 Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Islamic Economy*, p. 91.

64 Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*.

and exchange, accumulation and circulation of capital and the extraction and reproduction of surplus value under an economic framework of capitalist market relations.

Finally, the contradictions of an Islamist party like Jamaat vis-à-vis neoliberalism is its confusion to prioritize *Ummah* as a universal political actor and the *Saleh Jamaat* (the righteous party) for an emancipatory project against neoliberalism. The implications of such an ideological confusion are reflected in the Islamist project of global Islamic revolution followed by Global Islamic society, mostly argued by groups like Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Islamic revolution and Islamic state in one country. The Jamaat is clearly in favour of the latter position. However, it cannot altogether discard the concept of *Ummah*, which creates conditions to think about global Islamic expansionism with globalized forms of economy, culture and community inspired by the discourses of Islam. Thus, the concept of *Ummah* creates conditions to think about an Islamic globalization as opposed to the hegemony of Euro–American neoliberal globalization. Since both forms of globalization are based on private property, reproduction of surplus and accumulation and circulation of capital, it cannot be anything different but a capitalist globalization as such. Thus, if Jamaat holds on to the concept of *Ummah*, it cannot be conceptually opposed to the possibility of globalization as such even if it only opposes a particular form of globalization, namely the 'Western' one.

Islamist opposition to cultural globalization in India and Bangladesh

So far, I have shown that vis-à-vis neoliberalism, the positions of Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat are very different. However, on the issues of 'freedom of expression', 'blasphemy' and 'atheism' as expressed in Rushdie, Taslima Nasrin, Danish cartoon and Kerala textbook controversies, on issues of sexuality: particularly gay rights, anti-sodomy laws and live-in relationships, on issues of sexual permissiveness and 'nudity', which the Jamaat broadly categorizes under the single label 'Western cultural globalization', the positions of both Indian and Bangladesh Jamaat are similar in terms of vehemently opposing and condemning such acts. In Chapters 3 and 5 of this book, one can see how Islamist political mobilizations against controversial 'blasphemous' personalities bearing a Muslim family background like Taslima Nasrin and Salman Rushdie are common in both India and Bangladesh. But what is the logic of assertive political mobilization often taking refuge in violent protests against controversial 'blasphemous' personalities or say the Danish cartoonist? The media caricatures and stereotyped political cartoons equating Islamic religion and Muslims with 'terrorists', 'backwardness', 'irrational', 'violence', 'evil', 'brutal', 'oppressive', 'crazy', 'exaggerated masculinity',

'misogynist', 'harem', 'hedonist', 'subjugated women', 'duplicitous', 'vengeance', 'fanaticism', 'blackmail', 'distaste for compromise', 'double-talk', 'hijacker', etc.[65] are not new. The political cartoons caricaturing Muslims and Islamic religion in the Western media are as old as the historic moments of 1956–58 Suez Canal crisis,[66] 1973–74 oil crisis,[67] Iranian revolution and hostage crisis between 1979 and 1980,[68] the Gulf war of 1990,[69] and 9/11 followed by Afghanistan war in 2001 and invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003.[70] If Muslims and Islamic religion in general are portrayed in a bad light in all these cartoons, why the world did not witness so much of violent protests on these cartoons, which were essentially offensive? In other words, what was so special about the Danish cartoon that the Muslim protests became so violent? Is it the religious authority and sanctity of the Prophet that got challenged, which led to violent protests among sections of Muslim population on a transnational scale? Is it the religious authority and appeal of the Prophet as an ideal role model for the entire Muslim believers that enraged so many Muslims globally? Is it because the mocking and stereotyped portrayal of Nasser, Bin Laden, Khomeini and Saddam Hussein did not appeal to ordinary Muslims since many Muslims do not identify with them? Or is it the sedimented discourses of constant vilification and humiliation in regular stereotyping of the Muslims that galvanized the rage of ordinary Muslims to take the issue during the Danish cartoon controversy to protest against the stereotyping and vilification of both the Prophet and the ordinary Muslims?

I shall separately deal with the issue of Muslim protests against blasphemy and controversial opinions of Rushdie and Taslima on the one hand and the Danish cartoon and Kerala textbook controversy on the other. A forceful assertion of Islamism on the question of blasphemy in fact reflects the crisis of authority and insecurity of Islamists, since blasphemy fundamentally challenges the authority/legitimacy and core beliefs of religion and community. This insecurity of Islamists is rooted in the belief that if punitive action is not taken against the disobedient/disloyal and blasphemous person, then blasphemy can become a norm in the society and, in the long run, can challenge the very foundation of religious faith upon which authority of Islamist ideology is built. Thus, Islamists act assertively by ensuring the punishment or disciplining the violator of religious code of

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65 Said, *Orientalism;* Said, 'The Campaign Against "Islamic Terror"'; Gottschalk and Greenberg, *Islamophobia*.

66 Gottschalk and Greenberg, *Islamophobia*, p. 73, pp 113–116.

67 Ibid, pp 119–123.

68 Ibid, p. 125–129.

69 Ibid, p. 134.

70 Ibid, pp 130–141.

conduct (in this case, the blasphemer) with violence without waiting for the last day of judgement according to Islamic belief. It should be borne in mind that this Islamist political assertion is a function of an orthodox faith that relies on a scriptural–dogmatic understanding of Islamic religion and cultural practices. Islamist faith is essentially insecure in nature within the realm of modernist thought and postmodern anxieties of contemporary life.[71] The Islamist assertion in cases of censoring/banning a creative work like a novel is an attempt to close down a space of dissensus within the authentic boundaries of the community. There are historic precedence of Islamic power bloc suppressing and repressing tendencies like apostasy, heresy and blasphemy as evident from the condemned death penalty to the medieval Muslim mystic, Mansur Hallaj, alleged of apostasy[72] and the persecution of Bahais in Iran.

Faisal Devji argues that the peculiar Muslim protests in the Rushdie Affair and Danish cartoons on a transnational space without any particular party or organization playing the anchor role for such a worldwide response was actually possible due to the globalization of media.[73] It was through the media that the issue was discussed and circulated and images of the protests got a global audience crossing the borders of Britain and Denmark, resulting into further protests from the Muslim community in various other countries. Furthermore, right from the nineteenth century onwards, in British India, 'a diminution of the Prophet's religious status during this period was matched by a corresponding elevation of his status as a figure of love and reverence'.[74] The global protests also signify the 'splintering of Islamic authority' with more 'fragmentation and, thus, there is democratization of authority in the world of Islam that might account for the militancy of its globalization'.[75] But what actually hurt the Muslims that they were so raged to protest on these issues? Why does Islamists need to react violently instead of disregarding these issues? Why are Islamists so sensitive when someone denounces and critiques the Islamic religious authorities? Can Islamists at all afford to overlook and ignore the issues of religious blasphemy, atheistic plea and mocking of religious figures like the Prophet by both members and

[71] For a detailed exposition on this issue see Ahmed, *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promisse*; Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*; Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion*; Barber, *Jihad Versus McWorld*; Ismail, 'Being Muslim: Islam, Islamism and Identity Politics'.

[72] Louis Massignon, *The Passion of Al-Hallaj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, abridged edition, trans. and ed. Herbert Mason (1982) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[73] Devji, *The Terrorist in Search of Humanity*, pp 167–79.

[74] Ibid, p. 169

[75] Ibid, p. 175.

non-members of Islamic community? Even Khomeini who was non-engaging with the Western discourses[76] reacted assertively on Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* by issuing a death *fatwa*. Devji argues that to the Muslims, both Rushdie's novel and Danish cartoons tried to tarnish the image of Muhammad as a role model, as a person of civic virtue, as an ideal father, husband and family man that Muslims were so hurt and enraged to protest on those counts.[77] Islam as a political symbol is associated with protests against American imperialism, and local issues have not only resulted in escalated Muslim anger but also 'moved the issue well ahead of any demonstrations over Iraq, Afghanistan or Guantánamo Bay' and has nothing to do with 'American imperialism, economic exploitation or Third World dictatorship'.[78]

On the contrary, both liberal politics and liberal nation–states giving the clarion call of 'freedom of expression' were actually unable to manage the global arena characterized with such issues of Rushdie affair or Danish cartoon controversy involving the issues of 'personal hurt, insult and offence' that liberal democracy was completely unfamiliar with.[79] As Devji clarifies:

> 'By chancing in seemingly arbitrary fashion upon the Danish cartoons as a cause, Muslim protestors were only proving global Islam to be relatively unhampered by the political traditions proper to old-fashioned liberalism. … The Danish cartoons did not simply disguise the political or economic causes of Muslim anger in religious terms…[r]ather they allowed Muslims to set the terms for global politics precisely by fixing on an issue that national states are unable to address…Muslims and their Prophet were offended because they had been denuded of the protection that states and citizenship have to offer. Their hurt was nakedly felt and nakedly expressed, existing outside the cosseted debate on freedom of expression. It is because global Islam comes to us from the future that it exposes so clearly the historical limits of liberal democracy. Such limits are evident in the circular definition that has marked liberalism from its founding days: only those will be tolerated who are themselves tolerant. Such a definition deprives tolerance of any moral content by making it completely dependent on the behaviour of others. Tolerance therefore becomes a process of exclusion in which it is always the other person who is being judged. Even at its most agreeable, however, the definition is severely limited because its circularity works only within the

[76] Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear*, pp 113–114.
[77] Devji, *The Terrorist in Search of Humanity*, pp 170–173.
[78] Ibid, p. 175.
[79] Ibid, pp 173–176.

bounds of a national state. It is unable to deal with real differences at all and certainly not with difference at a global level'.[80]

On the problem of liberal 'tolerance', let me first add that the concept of 'tolerance' re-inscribes the so-called *superiority* of the tolerant subject over the so-called *inferiority* of the intolerant and tolerated. The argument of liberal 'tolerance' attempts to articulate that the tolerant person commands/deserves more respect than the tolerated as it is the *greatness* of the tolerant subject to tolerate a very different way of life, thinking and practices of the tolerated. Secondly, the so-called intolerant and tolerated subjects are defined by the parameters of the tolerant ones. It is the tolerant person who decides who should be tolerated and who should not be tolerated on the one hand and who is actually an intolerant person on the other hand.

While broadly agreeing with what Devji has to say on the issue of Muslim protests, let me further elaborate on the *dynamics of Islamist opposition* to such texts of Rushdie (1989), Nasrin (1994 onwards), Danish cartoons (2006) and Kerala textbook controversy (2008) vis-à-vis the response of Jamaat in India and Bangladesh. In analyzing the peculiar form of violent protests by sections of the Muslim community, one cannot just single handedly blame the limits of liberal democracy. Such an approach of only blaming the inability of liberalism to address the global issues of Islamist sentiments and censorship only makes liberalism an easy candidate for denouncement, without an introspection of the underlying logic of Islamist opposition to such texts. In other words, such an approach does not critically understand why Islamists behave in such a *violent* manner when encountered with a critical view about the religion of Islam.

In this respect, the following can be a possible question: why can Islamists not *ignore* such critical opinion about the Islamic religion, God or the Prophet? It seems that Islamists seek to protest against anybody whose opinions might threaten the very foundations of religious belief in the name of 'hurting religious sentiments'. In this respect, the state has often succumbed to the pressure of Islamists by arguing that if the demand of the Islamists is not met, then there is a threat of 'fomenting violence' and 'communal harmony'.[81] Political violence often unleashed by Islamists on such issues in both India and Bangladesh is

[80] Ibid, pp 175–176.

[81] The censorship debates around Taslima's writings focusing on the issues of 'free speech' versus 'hate speech', 'freedom of expression', 'democratic and humanitarian right of the author' versus 'hurting of religious sentiments' is well documented in Taslima Nasrin and Sujato Bhadro, *Nishiddho mot Dwikhandito poth* (Forbidden Opinion, Divided Path) (Kolkata: People's Book Society, 2004); Taslima Nasrin, *Narir Kono Desh Nei* (Woman has no Country) (Kolkata: Riju Prokashoni, 2009).

precisely the result of the absence of normative concept of individual *liberty* or *freedom* within the specific ideological morphology of Islamism.[82] According to the Jamaati Islamists, individual liberty or freedom is supposed to be submitted by humans to the creator and as loyal subjects, the obligatory duty of humans is to obey the rules of the creator because the humans or the created/creatures are born slaves of the creator.[83]

Bikhu Parekh argues that the 'fundamentalist discourse' is essentially a 'moral discourse'.[84] I further add that it is a regulatory discourse as well. In cases of Rushdie and Taslima, a regulatory morality is governed and legitimized by the religious authority and, then justified in the name of the holy text. This regulatory discourse is also a result of 'a crisis of identity and authority'[85] within a religious community. Thus, protests against 'religious blasphemy' of noted controversial novelists by the Islamists are the expression of an assertive political articulation with a purpose to *control* and *regulate* those *texts* which challenge the very foundational basis of religious doctrines, resist the sphere of religious authority and, in turn, violate the law of obedience and loyalty towards religious figures who enjoy that authority. Moreover, in cases of Rushdie and Taslima, there is a challenge coming from within the community as the texts of Rushdie and Taslima are themselves posing a threat to the religious authority per se. It is not anybody else outside the Muslim community like in the case of Danish cartoons or a Left government's prescribed school textbooks in Kerala, who are saying something inappropriate or making unwelcome statements about Islamic religion, or questioning the existence of creator or critiquing the moral purity of the Prophet. Rather, it is articulated by two novelists (in this case Salman Rushdie and Taslima Nasrin) who have a 'Muslim name' and, thus, a 'Muslim identity' for any layman Muslim, who does not even know or just don't bother to know whether Rushdie and Taslima are atheists in their personal beliefs or not. In fact, the Islamist concern is that how come a member of the Muslim community challenges the sphere of religious authority by proposing blasphemous statements and questioning the morality of the Prophet. That is why the Islamist assertion is deeply embedded in an anxious belief that if today, people who disobey religion cannot be suppressed and repressed, then a trend of religious blasphemy might be a common social syndrome among the Muslims. As Al-Azmeh argues, '(t)he rights of God concern protecting and maintaining the Muslim body politic through

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82 For a brief exposition on the morphology of Islamism see Browers, 'The Secular Bias in Ideology Studies and the Case of Islamism'.

83 Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam*.

84 Parekh, 'The Concept of Fundamentalism', p. 113.

85 Ibid, p. 109.

international relations both martial and pacific, and through invigilating its internal integrity by the creation of a *Rechtsstaat* and the suppression of ideological sedition—that is, unbelief, apostasy and…blasphemy'.[86] Therefore, before the revolt against Islamic faith within the Muslim community becomes a reality, the Islamists prepared themselves to challenge those who question the authority of religion and religious texts. This tradition of silencing and repressing the revolt against any Islamic theological and spiritual authority like *Allah* or the Prophet is nothing new. In fact, much before the Rushdie and Taslima issue, the Jamaat-e-Islami while disassociating itself from anti-Ahmadi mob violence was nonetheless opposed to the Ahmadis in early 1950s in Pakistan[87] for an 'authentic' Islamic system.[88] In other words, there is a history of constructing antagonistic frontiers within the politico-ideological discourses of Jamaati Islamists against what *they* identify as the blasphemous politico-ideological discourse.

In this respect, the Islamists would hardly pay any attention to the Quranic injunction that 'there shall be no coercion in matters of faith'.[89] But as an ideology of political action, Islamism strives to act on behalf of *Allah* and, hence, the 'criminal' who is accused of blasphemy would be punished in this World only. The threat of challenge from the blasphemous – the act of violation/violator (in this case, the blasphemous person) – has to be, thus, repressed with violence. The precise anxiety of Islamists is that if a revolt expressed in terms of blasphemy within the Muslim community is not suppressed promptly, the blasphemous might become an exemplar and the very non-action against the blasphemous person might be seen as the weakness of Islamic *ummah*. Since blasphemy is regarded as a 'revolt' by a member of an 'authentic' community, who 'dares' to challenge the foundations of religion and religious authority, it is generally repressed by the religious authority to maintain its hegemony over the 'authentic' community. Moreover, Islamism as a political ideology has an inbuilt narcissism, self-obsession and a sense of megalomania precisely because of the Quranic belief that Islam is the final apostle, the final holy book and is the rightful guidance for all of humanity. In Kantian sense, Islamism can be identified with *dogmatism* 'without previous criticism of its

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86 Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*, Third edition (London: Verso, 2009), p. 12.

87 Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 471.

88 Rafiuddin Ahmed, 'Redefining Muslim Identity in South Asia: The Transformation of the Jama'at-i-Islami', in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, Vol. 4 of the *Fundamentalism Project* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 680.

89 2:256 of *The Holy Quran*; source quoted from *The Message of the Qurān: The Full Account of the Revealed Arabic Text Accompanied by Parallel Transliteration* trans. and explained by Muhammad Asad, complete edition (Bristol: The Book Foundation, 2003), p. 69.

own powers'.[90] This dogmatic confidence of Islamism as the bearer of an 'absolute truth' and the right way to life gets shaken when it encounters such challenges like atheism and blasphemy because these trends only ignore the path of Islam and instead critique it for being 'oppressive', 'irrational' and 'regressive'. In the face of such stiff challenges of atheism, blasphemy and consumerist hedonism; Islamists become confused and sometimes take refuge to violence to eliminate its opponent's claims and opinions – in this case, the political articulations of atheism, blasphemy and consumerist hedonism.

In the context of the absence of a progressive political leadership among the Muslims, assertive identitarian mobilizations among sections of Muslims with Islamist rhetoric against 'religious blasphemous persons' often equated with 'Western agents' in Islamist discourses are possible. Thus, it was absolutely interesting to note in my fieldwork interviews that Jamaat leaders and supporters were keen to harp on the label of 'Western agent' to both Rushdie and Taslima. This is how Islamists vilify revolting members of the community by equating them with an already constructed antagonistic frontier/enemy, namely the 'West'. In the case of Danish cartoons and Kerala textbook controversy too, the 'West' is constructed as an antagonistic frontier by the Islamists as the political leadership of Jamaat thinks that the 'global-Western conspiracy' of Judeo-Christian world and the atheistic communists have been trying to make an offensive strategy against Islam by maligning Islam as a 'bad', 'undemocratic', 'violent' religion which has an historic legacy right from the period of Prophet's time and later on during the crusades and now currently being continued particularly after 9/11.

In analyzing the Islamist protests against the issues of 'Western cultural globalization' as the 'other' of the Islamist subject, an engagement with the psychoanalytical approach might be fruitful. As Žižek argues that it is in those moments of engagement with the 'other' when religion including Islam becomes 'particularistic in spite of its global expansionism', although at the same time 'there is a place for others – they are tolerated, even if they are looked upon with condescension'.[91] But this place of the degenerated/degraded 'other' is also a point of Islamist *envy* towards the *freedom* and *enjoyment* of the 'un-Islamic other', namely the 'sinner'. That is, to say, Islamists get perplexed and envious when noticing the freedom of non-Islamic persons (hence, 'sinner' in the eye of Islam) like Rushdie, Taslima, and the Danish cartoonist who even dare to challenge and vilify the authority of Islamic religious figures. This particular freedom to revolt by the 'un-Islamic other' against Islam has a sense/feeling of enjoyment, an

[90] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith, 1929, Second impression with corrections (London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 32.

[91] Žižek, *Violence*, p. 46.

enjoyment of the right and ability to revolt. This element of 'enjoyment', or what Jacques Lacan calls *jouissance*,[92] is deprived of or absent in the case of Islamists during moments of rebellious blasphemy or the negation of Islamic religion by the non-believers. Islamists get irritated by this lack of *jouissance* or enjoyment or happiness by revolting against Islamic faith and religious authority because its constitutive identity is originally shaped by a submission to the creator and not by revolting against the creator.

However, *jouissance* connotes both 'enjoyment' and 'suffering'. *Jouissance* means 'excitement whether correlated with a conscious feeling of pleasure or pain'.[93] Thus, one simply cannot deny the *jouissance* in Islam which signifies 'complete submission to Almighty: *Allah*'. Thus, 'submission to Allah' and a sense/feeling/belonging of a community of believers, namely the *Ummah*, also have its own pleasure and pain. The enjoyment is revealed in its celebration of collective solidarity among *Ummah*, its pride to belong to the *correct* path, its happiness in announcing her/his identity that (s)he belongs to the righteous path along with the hope of getting the eternal bliss of heaven in the afterlife. However, at the same time, pain or suffering is very much part of the life of an Islamist, who disciplines herself/himself by following the strict code of conduct in Islam and whose life is guided by the principle of sacrifice to fulfil the task of creating an ideal Islamic order. Islamists claim that they are always obedient and loyal subjects of the creator. In becoming a loyal and obedient subject of Allah, one has to lead a life that undergoes disciplining,

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92 Alan Sheridan, the translator of several of Jacques Lacan's works however says: 'There is no adequate translation in English of this word. "Enjoyment" conveys the sense, contained in *jouissance*, of enjoyment of rights, of property, etc'. See 'Translators Note', in Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, p. 281. Lacan has himself pointed out that '[t]he superego is the imperative of jouissance—Enjoy!' and thus made it clear that *jouissance* is closely related to enjoyment. See Jacques Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge*, 1972–1973: *Encore, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book 20*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller and trans. with notes by Bruce Fink (London: W. W. Norton & Co. 1998), p. 3. Also Lacan uses *jouissance* as an overlapping term for 'happiness'. See Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 1959–1960: *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Book 7, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller and trans. with notes by Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 2008), pp 237–239. In other contexts, it has been used as *beyond* 'pleasure' and in a way 'pleasure' is the 'first half-serious step…toward *jouissance*' or to signify 'pleasure' in another context and 'satisfaction of a drive'. See Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 228, 233 and 258. But Lacan has also used it as 'suffering' as he points out 'if we continue to follow Freud in a text such as *Civilization and Its Discontents*, we cannot avoid the formula that *jouissance* is evil. Freud leads us by the hand to this point: it is *suffering* because it involves *suffering for my neighbour*' (italics mine), See Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 227.

93 Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 60.

regimentation, suffering, pain and sacrifice. However, it is through undergoing pain or suffering that pleasure is derived by the Islamists. But it is at the same time that they feel envious to the 'non-Islam' and 'non-believer', who has the freedom to be a rebel and, in some cases, a rebellion against Islam itself, which Islamists certainly do not enjoy and, thus, make them frustrated and unhappy.

However, the contradiction exposed in the constitutive split within any given identity according to Laclau is that of *lack*. As Laclau observes:

> '(A)ny social identity would necessarily entail, as one of its dimensions, construction, and not simply recognition. The key term for understanding this process of construction is the psychoanalytic category of *identification*, with its explicit assertion of a lack at the root of any identity: one needs to identify with something because there is an originary and insurmountable lack of identity'.[94]

Both Islamic and Islamist subject *identify* with an identity of a submissive, obedient and loyal subject of the God, but this also means that there is an 'insurmountable lack' of a rebellious identity, a *lack* of disobedient and disloyal identity. This inability to become a disloyal subject of God is also the moment of its temptation to become such a disobedient subject but, at the same time, it cannot become rebellious. This *non-becoming* of a disloyal subject and yet secretly having the desire to become one such disobedient subject of God is the precise contradiction of the Islamists. Islamists sense that the obedient Islamic subject might have a temptation to become a disobedient subject one day/any day. That is why, they harp on the well-defined discursive concept of the 'Devil' (*Shaitan*) and its association with 'evil' or 'wrong path' according to Islamic beliefs. They also propagate among the Muslims and non-Muslims about the incentive structure in the Islamic religion for obedient subjects of God by giving hope and promising good life in this world (in an ideal Islamic state) and beyond, in heaven. In this respect, the Islamists also tell the Islamic subject about its responsibility and duty of establishing an Islamic state, which would be 'just' and 'prosperous'. Therefore, the *jouissance* of the Islamic community in following the religion of Islam is both material and spiritual and based on hope and promise for a better future. On the contrary, the temptation of becoming the disloyal subject is based on an assessment that right to revolt against God, and freedom to negate religion must have some pleasure/happiness/enjoyment, otherwise, why should people do that?

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[94] Ernesto Laclau, 'Introduction', in Ernesto Laclau, ed. *The Making of Political Identities* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 3.

Žižek argues that 'the moral majority fundamentalist is always haunted by the unspeakable pleasures in which sinners engage. The reference to envy as one of the seven deadly sins can thus serve as a perfect instrument enabling us to distinguish the authentic fundamentalism from its moral majority mockery: authentic fundamentalists DO NOT ENVY their neighbours their different *jouissance*'.[95] Therefore, the Islamist assertion against religious blasphemy is not just an initiative of suppressing the revolt against Islam but also informed by its frustrations of not enjoying the freedom of negation of religion of the non-believer/blasphemer and thus with an envious mode/mood, it turns violent against the non-believer/blasphemer. Žižek proclaims that '(m)odern society is defined by the lack of an ultimate transcendental guarantee, or, in libidinal terms, of total *jouissance*. There are three main ways to cope with this negativity: utopian, democratic and post-democratic. The first (totalitarianism, fundamentalism) tries to reoccupy the ground of absolute *jouissance* by attaining a utopian and harmonious society which eliminates negativity'.[96] In this respect, Žižek contrasts different kinds of 'fundamentalism' – 'authentic fundamentalists' (e.g. the Tibetan Buddhists or American Amish), 'pseudo-fundamentalists' of Christian and Muslim variety and 'Western liberal fundamentalists' by asking some questions and then trying to answer those:

> 'Are, however, the terrorist fundamentalists, be they Christian or Muslim, really fundamentalists in the authentic sense of the term? Do they really believe? What they lack is a feature that is easy to discern in all authentic fundamentalists, from Tibetan Buddhists to the Amish in the US: the absence of resentment and envy, deep indifference towards the non-believer's way of life. If today's so-called fundamentalists really believe that they have found their way to Truth, why should they feel threatened by non-believers, why should they envy them? When a Buddhist encounters a Western hedonist, he hardly condemns the latter. He just benevolently notes that the hedonist's search for happiness is self-defeating. In contrast to true fundamentalists, terrorist pseudo-fundamentalists are deeply bothered, intrigued, fascinated, by the sinful life of non-believers. One senses that, in fighting the sinful other, they are fighting their own temptation. …Deep inside themselves, terrorist fundamentalists also lack true conviction—their violent outbursts are proof. How fragile the belief of a Muslim must be, if he feels threatened by a stupid caricature in a low-circulation Danish newspaper? Fundamentalist Islamicist terror is *not* grounded in the terrorists' conviction of their superiority and in their desire to safeguard their cultural-

[95] Slavoj Žižek, *On Belief* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 68.

[96] Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (London: Verso, 2008), p. 325.

> religious identity from the onslaught of global consumerist civilization. The problem with fundamentalists is not that we consider them inferior to us, but, rather, that *they themselves* secretly consider themselves inferior. This is why our condescending politically correct assurances that we feel no superiority towards them only makes them more furious and feeds their resentment. The problem is not cultural difference (their effort to preserve their identity), but the opposite fact that the fundamentalists are already like us, that, secretly, they have already internalized our standards and measure themselves by them. …Paradoxically, what fundamentalists really lack is precisely a dose of that true "racist" conviction of one's own superiority. … Fundamentalism's passion is a false one, while anemic liberal tolerance relies on a disavowed perverse passion. The distinction between fundamentalism and liberalism is sustained by a shared underlying feature: they are both permeated by the negative passion of resentment'.[97]

Žižek has fundamentally grasped the root of the Islamist psyche. In this respect, the Jamaat's opposition to the controversial texts of Rushdie, Taslima, Danish cartoons and Kerala textbook can be explained in terms of its insecurity in its Islamic faith, the inferiority complex vis-à-vis the non-Islamic subject and what Žižek has rightly pointed out about the Islamist 'lack of true conviction', while being sustained by a 'negative passion of resentment'.

On the issue of homosexuality and live-in-relationships, both the Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat are staunchly opposed to such acts by condemning those acts, and in most cases, took refuge to moral policing followed by violent outbursts. The political discourse of moral policing is in fact embedded within most traditional and religious discourses concerning sexuality and the attempts to regulate sexual behaviour. The politics of moral policing, just like vehemently opposing atheism and blasphemy are *negative politics*, which are relatively easier to conduct than offering a *positive politics* of providing an 'alternative' to the existing mode of production and exchange as I have argued earlier. The tactical implication of such negative politics of opposing atheism, blasphemy, homosexuality and live-in-relationships by the Islamists is that it gets easily noticed. Such negative politics by the Islamist groups give them more publicity while justifying their acts of moral policing on grounds of moral prohibitions in Sharia laws, which according to the Islamists are legally binding on each and every Muslim. Moreover, these issues are generally related to few individuals or events or, at best, limited to small groups and, thus, easy to respond for the Islamists even in a non-Muslim country like India, given a significant opinion in a society prejudiced against atheism,

[97] Ibid, pp 332–333.

blasphemy, homosexuality, live-in-relationship, etc. But Islamists in both India (a non-Muslim country) and Bangladesh (a Muslim majority country) are unable to replace the socio-economic system with, say, Islamic laws, universalization of interest-free banking system, or replace capitalist mode of production and exchange with their goal of 'Islamic state'. Such transformative initiatives are not easy to materialize as they are time bound and need long-term political struggle. In Chapters 2 and 3, I have shown how JIH has got some success in playing a negative politics of opposing certain local level capitalist-developmental projects but failed to change macro-level neoliberal policies of the government despite its strong rhetoric against such neoliberal policies.

From our discussion so far, one can argue that Islamism can articulate protest but one needs to remember that it is a protest ideology against a hierarchical (dis) order to be replaced by another form of hierarchy, oppression and exploitation. The oppressive character of Islamism against many non-Muslim subjects, the apostates, blasphemous and atheists, can be noticed in its assertion against Rushdie, Taslima and homosexuality as well. The ideal of Islamic state that Islamism projects as an 'alternative' to 'man-made systems, laws and ideologies' while critiquing the socio-economic and political models of secularism, nationalism, capitalism, socialism and democracy is largely based on private property, theo-democracy and uneven politico-legal rights for women, non-Muslims and blasphemous persons. In an ideal Islamic state, as imagined by the Jamaat, both non-Muslims and women are subjected to discrimination in matters related to political and legal rights as they can be neither elected as the head of an Islamic state nor elected as members of the legislative assemblies, and there would be complete segregation of non-Muslims and women with that of the mainstream affairs of the Islamic political system.[98] Similarly, the Islamist opposition to the rights of divorced Muslim women in contemporary India has a history in the case of Shah Bano, which I have mentioned earlier in this book. Moreover, Islamists would hardly be sensitive to the homosexuals as that would be an illegal act in an 'Islamic state' imagined by the Islamists like Jamaat. In such an 'Islamic state', any pre-marital cohabitation like live-in relationships would also be regarded as illegal and 'adultery', and there would be strict punishment according to Sharia laws for such acts.

[98] For an elaborate discussion on such views of Islamists see Maududi, *Political Theory of Islam*; Maududi, *The Nature and Contents of Islamic Constitution*; Maududi, *The Islamic Law and Its Introduction in Pakistan*; Maududi, 'The Position of Islam with regard to Women', p. 136. Also see Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, p. 206; Nasr, 'Mawdudi and the Jama'at-i Islami', pp 108–110; Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, pp 168–172; Ahmad, *Islam and Modern Political Institutions in Pakistan*, pp 199–223.

One can now convincingly argue that the Jamaat in Bangladesh has complicity to neoliberal political economy and sometimes supports such a project, but it opposes the culture of consumerism, sexual permissiveness, etc., which are generally seen by them as the commercialized form of neoliberal moral and cultural philosophy. In contrast, the Indian Jamaat is opposed to neoliberalism in its totality along with its political economy and moral and cultural philosophy. This being said, one can also notice how JIH prioritizes the antagonistic frontier of the *Hindutva* form of majoritarian communalism than neoliberalism and imperialism. Contrary to JIH, the Bangladesh Jamaat identifies secularism and Leftwing political forces as greater political enemies of Islamism than neoliberalism. However, on substantive political issues like providing an 'alternative' of an 'Islamic welfare state' (although it has been discussed earlier that it is merely an alternative to contemporary neoliberalism than to capitalism as such); the Jamaat faces a significant crisis of political mobilization. Such a crisis of political mobilization is corresponded with an ideological crisis of Islamism as well; particularly, it's pre-occupation with the 'West' as the prime political enemy that will be discussed in the final section of this book.

However, before explicitly analysing the crisis of Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh, let me first recapitulate the discussions so far by summarizing the major highlights of the book. In the 'Introduction', after briefly discussing the topic of the book, I have clarified the terminologies that have been used in this study. Then, I have discussed the genealogical debate on the rise of Islamism in the Muslim world followed by the existing categories of analysis for research on Islamism. The chapter then moved on to assess the academic debates on Islamism apart from outlining a brief chapter plan.

In Chapter 1, while justifying the current book project, I critically examined the limitations of relevant literature on Islamism of the Jamaat-e-Islami variety in India and Bangladesh and identified my point of departure from the extant academic literature. I classified the existing literature on Jamaati Islamism as *ontic* studies or *ontical research*, largely concerned with empirico-factual analysis rather than engaging with broader *ontological* issues regarding the very *existence* of the political ideology of Islamism, which is my primary research concern. Also, the chapter critically assessed the existing theoretical and methodological frameworks followed by the methodological overview of the present study. Finally, in the subsection, *Ontological Engagements with Islam(ism)*, I briefly put forward my thoughts on the overlapping boundaries of religion and politics. I have argued how political fronts embedded within organized religion in general and Islam in particular create conditions for generating a political ideology called Islamism. I further tried to invoke the questions related to the emergence/existence of Islamism as a political ideology in contemporary Muslim societies and the possible explanations regarding the growth of Islamism as

a politico-ideological movement in our times. In discussing the existing literature, I further deployed three existing analytical frameworks: (a) understanding Islamism via the psychoanalytical category of 'return of the repressed' (b) Islamism as a 'protest ideology' after the collapse of anti-capitalist discourse of twentieth century socialism and (c) Islamism negotiating with the new hegemonic politics of neoliberalism.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I have focussed on the specific case study of Jamaat-e-Islami in India. Chapter 2, 'Islamism in Neoliberal India' has discussed the contemporary phase of neoliberal India, where Islamism operates in a minority context and the major politico-ideological debates within which Islamism is situated. The first subsection of this chapter under the heading *Contemporary Muslim Situation in Neoliberal India* briefly analyzed the socio-economic conditions of Muslims – the core constituency of Islamism, which forms a religious minority in India. It briefly discussed the peculiarities and specificities of the Muslim question by pointing towards the socio-economic and political marginalization of Muslims in *contemporary neoliberal India*.

The chapter then proceeded towards narrating three distinct *Politico-Ideological Articulations among Indian Muslims,* representing three varied groups of political leadership. This section argued that in India, historically the Leftwing progressive discourses were never a *dominant* political discourse among Indian Muslims and the majority of Indian Muslims form a 'moderate' group supporting secular political parties than any Islamist or Muslim communal groups. It disclosed three possible strands of Muslim political leadership corroborated with three distinct politico-ideological articulations within the community in a neoliberal policy regime. The first group is the token representation of Muslim leadership in mainstream political parties like Congress, BJP and those regional parties which run political affairs with an agenda of neoliberal consensus. The political leadership emerging out of this kind of collaborationist group with neoliberalism is the representative of power bloc and I have described this political articulation as *power bloc articulation* serving the interests of the neoliberal *status quo*. This power bloc political articulation is a dominant political discourse among Indian Muslims. The second group has an agenda of 'Muslim particularism' with only community-specific demands. This group comprises some small Muslim political parties and pressure groups with conservative Islamic and Islamist agenda. This politics of Islamism in India, which I termed as *politics of particularism* has specific narrow political interests for its constituency. Since the politics of Islamism cum Muslim particularism is entangled with theological discourses I have described it as *theo-political articulations* among Indian Muslims. I have pointed out that Islamism as such is a less popular political discourse among Muslim minorities in India. Further, I have argued that the Islamist politics in the form of Muslim particularism in India tries to celebrate its own marginality and seeks to be a part of

the power bloc by replacing a hierarchical society with another form of hierarchical society. It generally tries to negotiate with the politics of the power bloc. This politics of Muslim particularism often celebrates the *excluded* condition of its Muslim constituents while being located on the *margins* and then attack the power bloc from 'outside' but without having a radical agenda for social transformation. I have also described this politico-ideological position as *politics of altered status quo* (representing a mirror image of neoliberal *status quo*) that vacillates between collaboration and opposition to the dominant neoliberal power bloc. I have argued that the politico-ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism represent a politics of Muslim particularism and politics of altered *status quo* with theo-political articulations. Finally, I have argued that there can be a possibility of constructing *progressive political articulations* among Indian Muslims with the joint initiatives of liberal, secular and progressive sections of the Muslim community and the concrete initiatives of Leftwing politics that are currently marginalized both in the dominant political discourses of the country as well as among Muslims and, thus, can be regarded as a 'marginal political discourse' among Indian Muslims. In the final subsection of Chapter 2, I have engaged with the specific rhetoric of Jamaat-e-Islami against 'neoliberal capitalism', 'American imperialism', 'Indian state' and Indian 'ruling classes'.

Chapter 3, 'Islamic Universalism and Muslim Particularism: Ideological Articulations of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind' narrated diverse forms of politico-ideological articulations of Jamaat. This chapter described how the Jamaat reacts to contemporary issues in India by mobilizing its varied mass organizations among students, youth and women by articulating politics of resistance in many localized anti-capitalist and anti-state struggles while using the rhetoric of 'Islamic alternative'. I have shown how the Jamaat is critical of the politics of neoliberal economic reforms and foreign policy shifts of the Indian state and ideologically articulates a politics of anti-*Hindutva*, anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism. On the contrary, the chapter narrated how the Jamaat is more sympathetic to the Left and other secular democratic forces to forge broader anti-imperialist and anti-*Hindutva* alliances. This chapter also showed how the Jamaat is relatively soft on Indian nationalism and secularism and how it identifies Hindu majoritarianism as a prime antagonistic frontier to fight. Thus, in moments of elections, the Jamaat often supports secular-democratic political formations even if it carries forward a neoliberal agenda since Jamaat prioritizes *Hindutva* as a greater antagonistic frontier/political enemy than 'American imperialism' and neoliberalism. In this chapter, I also discussed how the Jamaat is critical of any form of terrorism, whether perpetrated by an individual, group or a state, as 'un-Islamic' and how it is concerned with the issues of security for Muslim minority citizens. This chapter also discussed how Jamaat is critical about 'Western cultural globalization' in the

form of its professed anti-consumerism. However, I also pointed out the staunch oppositions of Jamaat on the issues of live-in relationships, religious blasphemy, atheism and homosexuality/gay rights. The Jamaat's rhetoric on various issues that were discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 are, then, posited within the theoretical and ideological contradictions of Jamaat between what I have termed as 'Islamic universalism' and 'Muslim particularism'. The former is an attempt to pose Islam as an ideological guide for everybody – both Muslims and non-Muslims alike – and, thus, claims to be an emancipatory political discourse for entire humanity, while the latter is a narrow sectarian vision for placing particularist demands for only Muslims.

I have also argued how the Jamaat lacks a Universalist agenda of an Islamic state precisely because of the minority character of its constituency of Indian Muslims unlike Bangladesh, and how the plebian constituencies of India could not identify with the political project of the Jamaat at the same time. As a result, I argued how the Jamaat is unable to construct a populist politics of underdogs against a common antagonistic frontier of the neoliberal power bloc. Neither could it become the 'vanguard' of Indian Muslims by achieving a hegemonic position among the Muslim leadership in India nor could it rally other non-Muslim marginalized sections of Indian population. Thus, even if the Jamaat has an aspiration to represent a hegemonic politics of Islamic universalism, it is unable to do so and rather being relegated to a marginalized Muslim pressure group. This is what I have called the *limits of Islamist populism*, where its crisis of political mobilization in India encounters another strategic cum ideological crisis of unresolved tussle between Islamic universalism and Muslim particularism.

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed the case of Jamaat-e-Islami in India's Muslim majority neighbouring country, Bangladesh. Chapter 4, 'Islamism in Muslim Majority Context: The Case of Bangladesh' has focussed on the context of the rise of Islamism in Bangladesh. In the first place, I gave a brief overview of existing literature in accounting the rise of Islamism in Contemporary Bangladesh. After engaging with the existing literature on the rise of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh, I tried to add a political theory perspective in explaining the prominence of Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh. After doing such an exercise, I proceeded towards pointing out the broad contours of Mujibism to which the Islamist discourse of Bangladesh Jamaat was responding. In particular, I have highlighted the limits and problems of 'Kemalist' politics of Sheikh Mujib and subsequent military dictatorships with their inability to satisfy the democratic demands of the Bangladeshi people, which created conditions for Islamism to emerge as a prominent political player in Bangladesh. In this regard, I have argued how Mujibism turns out to be mimicry of the Kemalist project in Turkey.

Then, I pointed out the key politico-ideological discourses in contemporary Bangladesh within which Islamism tries to find its own niche audience. Finally, the chapter outlined the ideological interventions of Jamaat in terms of constructing antagonistic frontiers in Bangladeshi politics and briefly touched upon the specific rhetoric of 'Islamic alternative' in asserting Islamic universalism.

Chapter 5, 'Islamist Politics of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami: The Crisis of Islamist Populism' first outlined the neoliberal setting in Bangladesh and the nature of response by the Jamaat to such neoliberalism. It also discussed the Jamaat's assertive oppositions to the issues of atheism, blasphemy, live-in relationships, homosexuality via its call for censorship and moral policing against 'Western cultural globalization'. The chapter also analyzed the success and failures of Jamaat's electoral politics by assessing its rise in the late 1980s and early 1990s, while noticing the crisis of its electoral mobilization that actually started from the mid-1990s until the present, with each elections right from 1996, marking receding vote share for Jamaat in real terms. Subsequently, the chapter accounted for Jamaat's ideological crisis in the present conjuncture. In this context, I analyzed the structural constraints of political mobilization behind the Islamist project of Bangladeshi Jamaat and, thus, suggested possible reasons for the crisis of 'Islamist populism' in Bangladesh.

In Chapter 6, 'Islamism in Contemporary India and Bangladesh: Comparative Overview of the Politics of Alternative', I compare the similarities and differences of politico-ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism with regard to its rhetoric about 'Islamic alternative' in contemporary India and Bangladesh. I compare the politics of Jamaati Islamism vis-à-vis neoliberalism in both the contexts of India and Bangladesh, which has been discussed in the previous chapters. In making such comparisons, I argue how the position of Bangladesh Jamaat is fundamentally different from the Indian Jamaat's 'anti-neoliberalism'. Then, I venture out the limits and vacillations of Islamism in fighting/challenging neoliberalism in India and Bangladesh despite its political rhetoric of providing an (Islamic) 'alternative' to any 'man-made system'. I argue that even if Jamaati Islamism promises an 'Islamic alternative' to neoliberal capitalism, it *cannot* substantially give an alternative to capitalism in general. This is because it profoundly defends private property rights along with its inability to invent alternative Islamic modes of production and exchange other than the existing modes of production and exchange that humanity has already witnessed under tribal agrarian communities, feudalism and capitalism. I argue that Jamaati Islamism, at best, is articulating an agenda of Islamic welfare state and can be perfectly accommodated within the logic of capitalism with a system of wage labour and private ownership of major means of production. Thus, its cherished alternative of 'Islamic state' is not actually an 'alternative' to capitalism

but rather has an agenda to reform capitalism with a projected human face of welfarism. At present, this welfarist model of Jamaati Islamism is conflicting with neoliberalism that tries to provide an alternative to welfare capitalism by reducing state subsidy in education, health and other social sector benefits. Thus, Jamaati Islamism can promise an alternative to neoliberalism than an alternative to capitalism in general.

Further in the sixth chapter, while discussing the Islamist rhetoric against 'Western cultural globalization', I notice similarities in ideological articulations between Indian and Bangladeshi Jamaat on the questions of blasphemy, atheism, homosexuality and freedom of expression like in the cases of Rushdie and Taslima Nasrin controversies. In this respect, I also explain why on the question of neoliberalism, sometimes the positions of Jamaat are very different in India and Bangladesh, but why on the question of 'Western cultural globalization', the positions of Jamaat across the two countries are similar. Moreover, I try to assess the extent of crisis of Islamism in India and Bangladesh by analyzing the dynamics of Islamist opposition to 'Western cultural globalization' by tracing out the precise stakes that Islamism has in accepting such 'cultural globalization'.

Jamaat's opposition to 'capitalism', 'neoliberalism', 'American imperialism' and 'Western cultural globalization' brings out the 'West' as an antagonistic frontier in the ideological articulations of (Jamaati) Islamism as discussed in the book. But the question arises why (Jamaati) Islamism has to always target the 'West' as an antagonistic frontier? Previously, I have discussed in the 'Introduction' about how Hardt and Negri argue that Islamism is the ideology of losers of globalization. But an expert on Islamism like Mumtaz Ahmad would argue that Jamaat's 'struggle is not simple protest' and neither its struggle is 'merely a reaction against social dislocation which results from processes of socio-economic change'.[99] Rather, Jamaat's attempt is to 'find a secure place in the new social arrangements' and, thus, its 'selective retrieval of the Islamic past is intended to gain a firm foothold in the present'.[100]

Thus, Jamaat's anti-Western critique is more a culturalist and politico-ideological one as it never denies the acceptance of Western science and technology for the material benefits of the Muslim population, but it negates the cultural and political baggage of Western modernity like secularism, nationalism, liberal capitalism and socialism. Thus, it differentiates between 'modernization' and 'Westernization'.[101] Jamaat accepts the concept of modernization that entails technological, scientific and socio-economic development but rejects 'Westernization', signifying

[99] Ahmad, 'Islamic Fundamentalism in South Asia', p. 510.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid, p. 509.

un-Islamic systems that are based on secularism and sexual freedom as discussed in this book. By closely studying the Jamaat in the 1980s and writing in the first half of the 1990s, Mumtaz Ahmad argued that '(n)one of Jamaat's intellectuals has tried to articulate the issues of modernity beyond its instrumental aspects. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the debate on modernity is extended beyond science, technology and development to include such issues as pluralism, democracy, tolerance and freedom of thought and conscience, their attitude in this regard is at best ambivalent'.[102]

However, I have shown in this book that Jamaati Islamism in India has almost accepted religious and linguistic pluralism as well as liberal parliamentary democracy. It might be the case that JIH has no other option but to accept such ideals given the diverse and composite character of Indian nation–state and given the Muslim minority context in India. However, in this book, I have demonstrated that the Bangladeshi Jamaat is adamant in not accepting religious pluralism and instead asserts majoritarianism. Nonetheless, it has accepted liberal parliamentary democracy as a form of government and also practices democratic norms within its organizational activities (e.g. periodic elections to elect organizational leadership, process of debates, discussions and consultations for policy making) like the Indian Jamaat. It is the question of freedom of thought and expression that both Indian Jamaat and its Bangladeshi counterpart have been illiberal as reflected in their assertive oppositions to some writings of Rushdie, Taslima, as well as their oppositions to the question of pre-marital sexual relationships, homosexuality, atheism and blasphemy in the name of opposing 'Western cultural globalization'.

Thus, it is the precise limits of (Jamaati) Islamism that it cannot ignore the Western discourses and ideologies. Rather it has to always respond/react to the West as its existence is dependent on the sustenance of Western discourses and ideologies. In the context of neoliberalism in contemporary India and Bangladesh, which is largely a Western project, precisely a Euro-American project, Islamism survives either by opposing such a project or negotiating with such a project. Thus, in both India and Bangladesh, the (psycho)analytical category of 'return of the repressed' is not valid. Therefore, in India, (Jamaati) Islamism exists by opposing neoliberalism and in Bangladesh it exists by vacillating between opposing neoliberalism on the one hand and sometimes negotiating and carrying forward the neoliberal agenda on the other.

Thus, from the discussions in the book so far, it can be seen that Islamism is partly supportive of socio-economic, technological and infrastructural 'modernization', based on Western models of urbanization and modernization

[102] Ibid.

but opposed to (Western) cultural 'modernity'. Also, the ideological articulations of Islamism vary and change when the Islamists are underdogs and opposed to the power bloc than when they are a part of the power bloc. But I would further add that this is simply not a question of whether Islamists are inside or outside the power bloc. This is precisely the inherent ideological contradiction of (Jamaati) Islamism that cannot resolve whether it should respond to the West or ignore it. This is the precise ideological crisis of Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh.

Crisis of Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh

In the previous chapters, I have showed how (Jamaati) Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh has been experiencing a crisis of political mobilization. Apart from that I have also argued in the book that (Jamaati) Islamism in contemporary India and Bangladesh is also facing an ideological crisis. This ideological crisis of (Jamaati) Islamism is expressed in its profound ideological confusion and contradiction between what I have called 'Islamic universalism' and 'Muslim particularism' on the one hand and its pre-occupation with the 'West' as an antagonistic frontier on the other.

I have also argued earlier that the politics of Islamism is nothing short of a *politics of particularism* with specific narrow political interests for its constituency, namely the Muslims. This politics of Islamism although in the minority context of India tries to articulate a 'politics of particularism', but at the same time, it always struggles to articulate its Universalist claims by giving a call for organizing the Muslims in the name of *Ummah* as one can see in both India and Bangladesh. Since, conceptually, 'Ummah' incorporates the Muslim community in the world as a whole, Islamism always tries to claim itself as a 'mass ideology' instead of a 'class one'. For a mass ideology, it asserts the unity of 'Ummah' where persons coming from various class backgrounds, nationalities, linguistic and gender differentials can become a part. As an effective tool of political mobilization, the concept of *Ummah* as a homogenous universal concept is absolutely crucial in Islamist political ideology. In Laclau's terms, one can argue that in Islamist politics, *Ummah* acts as an 'empty signifier'[103] around which different particularities organize themselves to claim a common universality or universal identity. In India, I have shown how the Islamic notion of *Ummah*, a central concept in Jamaat's politico-ideological discourses was a hindrance to construct a successful project of Islamist populism.

[103] For a theoretical understanding of the concept of 'empty signifier', see Laclau, 'Why do Empty Signifiers Matter to Politics?' in *Emancipation(s)*, pp 36–46.

By contrast, in Bangladesh, the concept of *Ummah* being central to Jamaati Islamism, in fact, reaped comparatively better results in terms of political mobilization. However, the Islamist project based on the resistance of *Ummah* against the antagonistic frontiers is currently in crisis in Bangladesh. This is because unlike India, the Muslim community of believers (*Ummah*) in Bangladesh is relatively heterogeneous by socio-economic and political parameters. Moreover, the Islamic concept of *Ummah* is equivalent to the notion of population than the plebs. We have learnt from Laclau that without taking into account the heterogeneity and the existence of a chasm between plebs and the power bloc within any given population, a populist politics of the people/underdogs is impossible. The Islamic concept of *Ummah*, in fact, neutralizes the antagonistic frontiers between the plebs and the power bloc within the Muslim community in the name of Islamic religion that justifies the existence of rich and poor and the existence of socio-economic and political hierarchies as 'natural'. Foregrounding *Ummah* as an empty signifier by the Islamist discourse of Jamaat is more identified with the project of harmony and brotherhood/solidarity among the power bloc and the plebs than a project of antagonism. In fact, the category of *Ummah* can be seen as an equivalent of 'Islamic' population than the plebs/underprivileged, thus making the scope of populism limited. In such a situation, the Islamist search for equality and social justice is conceptually contradictory to the concept of *Ummah* because the Muslim community of believers is itself split into privileged and underprivileged sections. Thus, the Islamists' call for the 'unity of *Ummah*' from the very beginning might always face difficulty, given the enormous challenge to organize varied particularities within the Muslim community like class, gender, nationality, language, etc. under the Islamist banner.

Nonetheless, it is the empty nature of such an empty signifier like the concept of *Ummah* that provides the ground for the Islamists to take the challenge of rallying the entire Muslim community – cutting across class, gender, nationality, language etc. – under its political project. Such a political project of rallying varied sectors of the Muslim population under the Islamist banner is what I have called *Islamist populism*. In this book, I have demonstrated that such a political project of *Islamist populism* is facing a crisis of political mobilization in contemporary India and Bangladesh for various reasons. In contemporary India, Islamist populism of Jamaat is unable to become the hegemonic politico-ideological project among the Indian Muslims due to the presence of several other Muslim and Islamic groups that contest each other to be the spokesperson of the Indian Muslims. Moreover, several non-Muslim sectors of the Indian population who are adversely affected by the neoliberal policy regime in India hardly identifies with the Islamist populist struggle of Jamaat against neoliberal capitalism despite Jamaat's rhetoric against

the contemporary neoliberal policy regime in India and some localized resistance movements against ventures of big capital under the auspices of such a policy regime. In contemporary Bangladesh, Islamist populism faces an electoral crisis apart from a sustained crisis of political mobilization for an Islamic welfare state. Moreover, in an era when the contemporary phase of capitalism is increasingly becoming identical with neoliberalism, Jamaat's repeated rhetoric against capitalism for an Islamic welfare state, which is conceptually not different from the economic models of welfare and regulated capitalism, fails to attract a significant section of Bangladeshi population. Apart from such issues, (Jamaati) Islamism in contemporary Bangladesh also faces an ideological contradiction in defining its position/stance towards several neoliberal policies and towards the Bangladesh liberation movement that gave birth to the nation–state of Bangladesh. However, in both India and Bangladesh, Islamist populism of Jamaat faces the political constraint of being numerically outnumbered in a representative democracy and, thus, being unable to change any major policy direction against the neoliberal project in favour of Islamic welfarism.

Then, on the question of Islamist pre-occupation of the 'West' as an antagonistic frontier, currently, Islamism in India and Bangladesh has not taken the path of disengagement with the Western political discourses of liberty, freedom, secularism, etc. as it was the case with Khomeini in Iran according to Sayyid. Rather it opts for a dual route of confrontation on the one hand and negotiation on the other, on a case-by-case basis. The current protest/challenge of (Jamaati) Islamism to the West not only signifies the crisis of Eurocentrism or Western universalism, but it also signifies a dual crisis of both Islamism and the West precisely because of the engagement of Islamism with the West. Without the West, Islamism cannot operate as it has to construct an antagonistic frontier, and the easily best candidate suitable for filling/occupying the vacant position of 'enemy' of Islamism is none other than the 'West' itself. In fact, the contemporary history of the past few decades only shows that both the West and Islamism have been trying to construct each other as 'enemies'. Here it should be borne in mind that while *antagonism* is a friend/foe relation which is 'the limit of all objectivity'[104] and a 'struggle between enemies, *agonism* is a struggle between adversaries'.[105] The agonistic model of democratic politics does not perceive the opponent 'as an enemy to be destroyed but as an adversary whose ideas (are) combat(ed) but whose right to defend those ideas (are) not put into question' because 'an adversary is a legitimate enemy'.[106] In this respect, Chantal Mouffe points out that 'the task of

[104] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, p. xiv, 122.
[105] Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), pp 102–103.
[106] Ibid, p. 102.

democracy is to transform antagonism into agonism'.[107] One can argue that in the case of present tussle between Islamism and the West, the antagonistic model is not transformed into agonism via a democratic engagement.

The binary opposition between 'Islamism' and the 'West' is not simply a construction of Orientalists, but it also emanates from the logical corollary of arguments of both Islamists and a section of postmodern celebration of Islamism as I find in the work of Sayyid, who seems to have uncritically accepted the project of Islamism. This portrayal of Islamism as a 'protest discourse' against the 'Western hegemony' only creates an image that both the Western power bloc and Islamism take each other seriously by giving due importance without being able to relegate each other into redundancy by constructing a no-enemy world. This kind of discourse with its emphasis on an essential conflict between 'Islamism' and 'West', in fact, produces an *all encompassing discourse*, reflecting a mirror image of Orientalism, where the debates are polarized on the lines of a fundamental contestation between two actors. It is no less than a politics of mutual Othering between Orientalism and Islamist Occidentalism. Effectively, this eliminates, erodes and obliterates any other critical political discourse that might not take a position either in favour of Western power bloc or Islamism and rather choose to be in opposition to both.

Indeed, when there are attempts to construct such a binary logic of a tussle between Islam and the West, we must resist such a temptation to choose a camp between Orientalism and Islamist Occidentalism. Rather one must think beyond such fault-lines and struggle to create a critical political, ideological and intellectual discourse that should contest the hegemony of orientalism, neoliberalism and the exclusive project of Islamism, which in the name of an emancipatory Universalism, reproduces a political project that sustains much of the exploitation and oppression under conditions of contemporary capitalism. I have tried to precisely do such an exercise in dealing with the academic discourse that centres around the debates between the West and the Islam by identifying the problems of Euro–American neoliberalism that is being mimicked in India and Bangladesh on the one hand and the *limits* and inability of Islamism in providing an 'alternative' to neoliberalism on the other.

[107] Mouffe, *On the Political*, p. 20.

Appendix

The raw qualitative data in the form of organizational documents, interviews, press statements, press releases and pamphlets has been more or less retained intact while reproducing it in this book from the original sources.

Appendix 1

The rhetoric of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind [JIH] against what it calls 'Western/American/global imperialism':

'Political circles and masses of our country are fully aware of the danger posed by global imperialism and they also express frequently their misgivings in this regard…India has not been able to face squarely the hegemonising tendencies of global imperialism. The impact of imperialism may be clearly seen in our foreign policy, economic order, and legislation as well as in the dominance of western culture and values. Our country seems to have succumbed to imperialist pressure. It is also a sad fact that our country is beset with grave problems of corruption, hunger, disease, conflict, chaos, oppression and injustice…Turning to the international scene, the most visible phenomenon is the emergence of western imperialism led by America which seeks to dominate the world and monopolize its resources. One of the strategies employed by imperialism is economic globalization. The capitalist system is spreading its influence throughout the world, and the nominally independent and sovereign nations and their legal systems are continuously compromising with its demands. The second strategy of the imperialist campaign consists of indirect military intervention as well as direct aggressions aimed at enslaving sovereign countries. The Muslim countries, in particular, are the victims of this aggression. The third imperialist method is the exploitation of the world economic and political forums to curtail the freedom of sovereign countries through undue intervention in their internal affairs under various pretexts (like the issue of human rights violations or the issue of nuclear disarmament). Yet another method adopted by imperialism is the promotion of permissiveness, nudity, and consumerism under the garb of modernism. The imperialist vision is the ultimate dominance of the materialistic outlook which

would transform the whole world into a huge market for western capitalism. The people would be so deprived culturally and ethically that they would easily succumb to the imperialist onslaught. One must mention that there are indeed individuals and groups throughout the world and even in the west itself, who are opposed to the imperialist designs and who believe in justice and fair play. Presence of such elements is a ray of hope for the future of humanity and if they become active and effective, the imperialist march may be checked…The Jamaat seeks to acquaint all fair minded people and particularly the Muslims, with the grave danger posed by global imperialism. They should motivate the countries of the world and in particular our own country, to effectively face and counter the imperialist onslaught'.[1]

Appendix 2

The press statement of JIH about a seminar on 'India's Foreign Policy: Past, Present and Future' on 10th March 2007 at New Delhi:

'Following the shift in India's economic policy in favour of an accelerated neo-liberal agenda since the early 1990s, the foreign policy has come to be aligned closely with the US. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the world has come to be dominated by the United States that has extended its domination by suppressing all forms of resistance to US policy and following 9/11… [has] divided the world between those "for us" and "against us", directed in substantial measure against the countries and peoples of West Asia. It is based on a clear strategy that spreads Islamophobia and demonizes Muslims. Therefore the current Global War on Terror is only an excuse to wage war, occupy nations and monopolise their resources. India's acceptance of the global domination of the US is reflected in 18 July 2005 agreement on nuclear policy with the US, its recent conduct in the WTO, cooperation with the US agenda for India on genetically modified foods, its growing relationship with Israel including military relations, its complete reversal on its support for Iran and virtually pulling out of the Indo-Pak-Iran gas pipeline deal and its willingness to be part of the "global war against terror"'.[2]

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1 *Jamaat-e-Islami Hind [JIH] Policy and Programme, April 2007-March 2011* (New Delhi: Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, 2007), pp 4-8.

2 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=51&pageid=59 accessed on 22/02/2010.

Appendix 3

The rhetoric of JIH in a pamphlet on 'Anti Capitalist Imperialism Campaign':

'In 1991 a Financial Crisis was created in our country. To get rid of it, our rulers sought the help of IMF and embraced its policies. From that time onwards, we too took that disastrous path of Economic Liberalisation whose natural outcome is slavery and poverty. Our policy makers started neglecting agriculture and rural economy. They started reducing public spending on social and welfare sectors. FDI started pouring in and its strong streams swept away the small local industries. Huge public sector companies were privatized creating massive unemployment. The trades of poor like grocery, vegetable etc. were opened for big corporate houses. Public funds were generously invested in beautification of big cities and building infrastructure mainly aimed at the elite business class. In short, the policy making took a new turn, escalating its focus on the rich and powerful and criminally neglecting the poor and backward. These policies have been helpful in creating the wealth. But this newly created wealth got converged in a few rich hands'.[3]

Appendix 4

The issues of growing inequality in India, rural distress and farmer suicides are discussed in the Jamaat pamphlet with statistical information:

'We have been at number 2 in terms of GDP growth and at number 4 in the world and no. 1 in Asia in terms of the number of billionaires. But this has not helped us in making the lives of our poor citizens better. Our rank in Human development Index is consistently falling and now we are ranked at 134 in the world. It implies that despite of a high rate of increasing wealth, the condition of our poor majority is getting worsened. [Present] policies are negatively impacting the agriculture and rural economy. Two third of India lives in villages. When our GDP was growing with an impressive 9 per cent rate, the growth in agriculture sector was just 4 per cent, which further deteriorated to just 1.8 per cent last year.

[3] http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=111&pageid=555 accessed on 22/02/2010.

We spend only 20 per cent of our infrastructure budget in rural areas. When we impressed everyone in the world with our GDP growth, largest ever wave of suicides in human history was passing through our country with around 17000 farmers killing themselves every year'.[4]

Appendix 5

The JIH pamphlet argues about the crisis of public health and education in India:

'The situation of public health in our country is among the worst in the world. Over five million children die in our country due to lack of proper treatment. This figure is half of the world figure. But still, in the ranking of the countries based on the ratio of health spending to GDP, we are fifth from the below in the list of 175 countries prepared by WHO. On Education, our expenditure in proportion to GDP is less than many poor African countries…Education is getting costlier. Quality Higher Education is getting out of rich for poor and even middle class populace…education is gradually being confined to producing human resources for the corporates. The relation of education with our socio-cultural values and our social needs is getting weakened'.[5]

Appendix 6

The JIH pamphlet talks about the issue of 'displacement' in contemporary India:

'Poor, tribals, and villagers are being displaced from their lands. Since independence over six crore people have been displaced. Over 80 per cent of them have not been rehabilitated. In the name of Special Economic Zones people are being displaced, workers are being exploited and capitalists are getting freedom to establish semi-independent states within the country… Environmental Crisis is the contribution of these policies only. Today, neither our air is safe nor the water. The human existence is at stake and our planet is in unprecedented danger'.[6]

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.

Appendix 7

The notion of 'Freedom' in Jamaat backed Solidarity Youth Movement pamphlet:

'Freedom can be realized only when even the least minuscule remnant of imperial exploitation perishes. For banishing poverty, backwardness and all multifarious exploitations, total annihilation of capitalism is a must. The capitalistic-imperialistic powers are now on a globe trot for looting the resources of people. They are plundering the natural resources of the third world…had taken hold of the oil-fields [and] natural gas throughout the world. They are siphoning out the life-giving fresh water resources of earth also. Solidarity places itself in the path of struggle against this blatant, day-light looting. The capitalistic ways of governing the contemporary world has to be strongly opposed and defeated. For this an incessant struggle has to be waged. It is only through this struggle that we can realize the protection of human rights, restore democratic values, eliminate poverty, protect the health of people and ensure education for all… In this context, Solidarity is now organizing a relentless struggle for realization of true freedom and is making extensive use of the resources of youth-hood for retrieval of this actual freedom'.[7]

Appendix 8

Field interview with SYM leader, M. Sajid on the issue of 'Development':

'We are protesting against imperialism. Today imperialism in general and capitalistic imperialism or what experts call neoliberalism and neo-colonialism is a major issue of our time. This capitalist imperialism has a special design of "development". "Development" is always related to certain politics and not at all apolitical with very specific socio-economic concerns for particular classes. From the liberalisation era of 1990s, we can notice that a particular model of capitalist development in India is perpetrated. We are opposed to several so called developmental projects which displace people. These developmental projects are not for development of common people. This development model is anti-poor'.[8]

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7 Excerpts from SYM pamphlet: 'Oceans without waves, are they beautiful and captivating? What about youths without a revolutionary zeal?' collected from JIH National Headquarters in Delhi on 02/12/2008.

8 Interview with M. Sajid in Delhi, 02/12/2008.

Appendix 9

The JIH manifesto before 2009 Parliamentary elections in India places the following demands under the plank of 'Development':

'(i) Ensure just distribution of resources among all sections of the society (ii) In basic infrastructure development initiative such as roads, bridges etc. there should be no role for Public Private Partnership (iii) Amend the Land Acquisition Act, prohibiting acquisition of agricultural lands for industrial purposes and mandating proper compensation for the acquired lands (iv) Enact a comprehensive Rehabilitation Act to ensure that: (a) the life standard of evicted people improves compared to the previous condition (b) Eviction should be done only after complete and satisfactory rehabilitation (c) Modify the SEZ act including the labour laws, removing the boundless powers vested on Development Commissioners, removing the limitless tax exemptions etc. (v) Introduce low price, interest free housing scheme for the poor and middle class (vi) Appoint a commission to study the use of land, the landless people and the illegal land grab by various corporate companies and implement its recommendations'.[9]

The JIH manifesto before 2009 Parliamentary elections in India places the following demands on 'Economy':

'(i) The interest on loans to farmers, poor entrepreneurs and other micro-credits should be brought to zero per cent and a law should be enacted to effectively check the exploitation by private money lenders (ii) Minimize the dependence on IMF and World Bank and support and develop a third world alternative to the IMF-World Bank framework (iii) Explore the opportunities for internal resource mobilization rather than depending more on international loans. Retract unnecessary legislations blocking resource mobilization of states from within the country (iv) Interest Free Banking should be included in the banking system which has already been recommended by the high level committee in the financial sector reform (CFSR) of the planning commission. Banking Regulations Act has to be suitably modified to accommodate this'.[10]

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9 http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=459 accessed on 05/10/2009.

10 Ibid.

The JIH manifesto before 2009 Parliamentary elections in India places the following demands on the issue of 'Health':

'(i) Make Right to Health a fundamental Constitutional Right and enact a Right to Healthcare Act under which all Indian citizens can get easily accessible, quality healthcare services (ii) Stop privatization of healthcare and abdication of the state's responsibility for health of citizens in the country (iii) Raise budget allocation for health to 5 per cent of GDP by 2012 and to 10 per cent of GDP by 2015; Allocate adequate portion of the health budget to traditional healthcare systems also (iv) Provide emergency interest free loans to all needy citizens during illness (v) Enact a Rational Drug Policy that allows the sale of only generic drugs and also limit the patent holding rights on all drugs to a maximum of five years (vi) Enact a comprehensive Health regulation Act to stop the malpractices and exploitation by corporate hospitals and to ensure proper mechanism of licensing, regular prescription audits, adherence to standard medical processes, maintenance of proper records and its access to patients and proper geographical distribution of practitioners and institutions'.[11]

As far as 'Education' is concerned, the JIH articulates the following demands in its manifesto:

'(i) At least 6 per cent of GDP should be spent for education sector (ii) To materialize the article 21A of the constitution, enact the Right to Education with necessary amendments in the "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill 2008" to ensure that free education would be of equitable quality and in the mother tongue of the child. Financial obligations to union and states [must] be clearly spelt and inequality [must] not be promoted in the system (iii) Enact comprehensive law to ensure equity and justice in the admission and fees structure of self financing educational institutions (iv) Make the procedures for getting minority status for educational institutions easier (v) Remove all the communally biased contents from school text books of all states (vi) Urdu medium schools should be provided with necessary infrastructure and [sanctioned] posts (vii) No FDI should be allowed in education sector (viii) Fees in Universities and colleges should not be hiked (ix) Minority status of Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University should be recognized in explicit terms (x) Special measures should be undertaken to provide primary and secondary education to children working in cottage and small industries (xi) Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya facility [should] be extended to Minorities and backward classes concentrated areas too'.[12]

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11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

In the field of 'Agriculture', the Jamaat manifesto includes the following demands:

'(i) Requisite efforts should be made to promote agrarian sector and safeguard the farmers and rural population from exploitation (ii) Implement the recommendations of Swaminathan Commission on farmers (iii) Allow interest free loans to needy farmers (iv) Total ban on Future Trading and Forwarding of agricultural commodities (v) Triple the existing budgetary allocation on agricultural sector (vi) Revoke the Indo US knowledge initiative on Agriculture (vii) Regulate contract farming by corporate groups (viii) Revoke the clauses of Intellectual property rights from seeds'.[13]

On the issue of 'Industries', the Jamaat articulates the following demands in its 2009 manifesto:

'(i) Encourage and subsidize low and medium industries, especially cottage industries (ii) Stop privatization of Public sector industries (iii) Stop FDI in retail sector (iv) Enact legislation to check the crippling influence of big corporate groups in retail sector which leads to devastation of ordinary retailers (v) Cancel the licenses of all industries causing pollution and recover full damages from them for harm caused to the people and environment (vi) Bailout packages should be provided to sinking industries like textiles, diamonds, carpets etc'.[14]

Appendix 10

The Resolution of the JIH's CAC on economic inflation in India:

'The CAC expressed its grave concern on the alarming rise in prices, especially of essential commodities…due to the faulty economic policies of the Government and also due to insufficient and half hearted measures to control the price rise. The pressure of the imperialist capitalism, trade based on speculation and hoardings are the main causes which should be countered to control the price rise. The CAC demands a comprehensive reorientation of economic policies in tune with the welfare of the people. The state should not succumb to the pressure of multinationals, the World Bank or IMF. The government should curb wastage

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

of public money by ministers and officials. Those taxes which contribute to price rise should be avoided. The CAC is apprehensive that if not controlled effectively, the price rise may lead to widespread unrest'.[15]

Appendix 11

Excerpts from JIH people's manifesto before 2009 Lok Sabha elections on Foreign Policy matters:

'(i) India should revive its original non-aligned policy and should back the interests of developing and poor countries in all international forums (ii) Repeal the 123 agreement with USA (iii) Should condemn Israel's aggression on innocent Palestinian, demand end of Gaza blockade, recognize Hamas led government as a legitimate democratic government of Palestine, support a separate Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and condemn the racial Zionist policies of Israel (iv) Should abolish Indo-Israel strategic alliance. Should not engage Israel in security and defence related matters (v) Should abolish Indo-US strategic alliance. Should condemn the imperialist design of USA, [should] demand complete pull out of USA & NATO forces from Iraq and Afghanistan (vi) Revive SAARC. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh should sign no war pact and a pact on terror free sub continent. Should promote good and friendly relations with all neighboring countries'.[16]

Appendix 12

The description of some SYM agitations and initiatives with catchy slogans:

'"Always with poor and downtrodden," "Bush, you are unwelcome in India, no place for you in human civilization," "Heralding a new era of environmental consciousness—a massive workout for refurbishing the coastline with mangroves," "Salt-Sathyagraha revisited—raising consciousness against neo-capitalistic policies of Government," "For us, service to people is worship to

[15] http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=640 accessed on 26/04/2010.

[16] http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=459 accessed on 05/10/2009.

God—correctly channelising the energy of youth," "We are pledged to shackle the Shylocks who aspire to rule the world," "Vote against Iran, shame to the Nation," "Manmohan—your mandate is not to sell India—Solidarity observes Independence Day as 'Protect Freedom Day'," "Toiling to build the dreams of the poor and shelterless."'[17]

Appendix 13

Anti-imperialist assertion of SYM in its pamphlet:

'Solidarity is a revolutionary youth movement inspired by consciousness of God. It derives inspiration from the critical struggles undertaken by Prophets in history against enemies of God and people, who have tried to impose their illegitimate hegemony over the world. Solidarity boldly questions the irreligious imperial dominance and repressive regimes that are growing stronger all over the world. Solidarity supports all liberation movements throughout the world, fighting against weapons race and against invasions of the new imperialism. We understand that the common task of humanity is to unify all the collective efforts for freedom and liberation and thus to create a formidable defence against the global evil of wanton American supremacy'.[18]

Appendix 14

Field interview with M. Sajid on Coca Cola agitation:

'Our second phase of agitation was to make at least 25 Cola free villages throughout Kerala, although we succeeded to make 100 Cola free villages. Cola free village means that the village people would not allow any Cola truck to enter the village. With the help of Cola retailers and shopkeepers, we were able to make such Cola free villages. In this way, Coca Cola was virtually banned by the people only in those hundred villages. Later on, this ban came from the Kerala government. We got to know from the Coca Cola website that due to this agitation which was led by us and joined by many other organizations, a major setback was experienced in terms of Coca Cola sales in Kerala. Similarly, we are also agitating against

[17] Excerpts from Solidarity Youth Movement brochure collected on 02/12/2008.

[18] Excerpts from SYM pamphlet titled: 'Oceans without waves' collected on 02/12/2008.

water privatization and decreasing ground water levels along with the noted environmentalist, Vandana Shiva'.[19]

Appendix 15

Field Interview with M. Sajid, justifying the opposition to the Kerala Express Highway project:

'We were opposed to the project not because that we are anti-development. We have to first understand the development requirements of Kerala society. The so called advantage [of this highway] was that if you take a car from the northern end of Kerala i.e. Kasaragod, you can reach the southern end, Trivandrum by 6 hours. But how many people actually want to drive a car from Kasaragod to Trivandrum for 6 hours? How many people will be benefiting from this project? Very few rich persons, who drive cars would benefit from this project. Well, if that benefit is not harming others, we would have considered. But this small benefit is actually at the cost of many thousand lives. So, this express highway is not our dream. Moreover, if you have to fill up this bridge with soil, many hills would become martyrs. So the environmental question and displacement of common people is [important]. Now, if you calculate the whole balance sheet of this project, taking into account of the environmental question, displacement issue, the number of beneficiaries and hindering the right to free travel of the common people, then this project is wrong. This project would be benefiting the builders, developers, their commissioning agents and the ministers'.[20]

Appendix 16

Jamaat's support for the Left on grounds of 'anti-communalism' and 'anti-imperialism' has been echoed by M. Sajid in the following words:

'When we talk to the Congress leaders during our placement of demands after agitations, or when they come to seek our support for votes, they talk in a very simple political dialogue. They just say, you leave all these issues and just support us. But Jamaat's policy is that when we support any specific political party, we

[19] Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.
[20] Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.

support on the basis of certain fundamentals. So, we supported the Left front as a whole in the last 2006 Kerala Assembly election because the Left is comparatively better on the issue of communalism and imperialism. After India's vote against Iran in the IAEA on the advice of America, and the Congress government's alliance with US on war on terror project and Nuclear deal—we increasingly felt that it would be difficult for the Jamaat to take a pro-Congress stand in Kerala politics. Congress also understood this thing'.[21]

Appendix 17

M. Sajid talks about the anti-imperialist political alliances of JIH in the following words:

'When we interact with common people and Left intellectuals, we tell them that whatever we are doing, our motivation is Islam. Our action is guided according to the Quranic principles. So, we also present Islam to such people when we talk about development and imperialism. For example, we compare between the perspectives of Marxism and communism with Islam on the issues of development and imperialism. In this respect, we use to contrast the depthlessness of non-Islamic viewpoints like Marxism in critiquing development and imperialism. We assert that the issue of resistance to capitalistic development and imperialism is not a monopoly of the Left but it is the duty of every Muslim to resist capitalism and imperialism. There is a general feeling that if somebody is talking about American imperialism, then it must be a Leftist agenda. We want to tell that it is nothing about left and right but right and wrong, in which case, Islam has something to say about these issues. However, keeping in mind about the practical political field, we believe that there should be a broad alliance of all anti-imperialist factions against imperialism, whether it is Islamist, Leftist, socialist, Gandhians- everyone. Environmentalist, Vandana Shiva has come to our many programmes. We always try to connect all these people to widen the anti-imperialist platform. We try to attract whoever is ready to come for this anti-imperialist struggle. So, on the one hand, our intention is to broaden the anti-imperialist platform but on the other, we tell them that Islam has a strong anti-imperialist notion'.[22]

[21] Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.

[22] Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.

Appendix 18

A Press note of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind clarifies its position on 2009 Maharashtra Assembly Elections:

'Due to emergence of the Third Front and failure of the Congress-NCP Government in Maharashtra to resolve major public issues and the policy of injustice, have led [the] Advisory Council of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Maharashtra to pull out its earlier decision of party-wise support in elections…The Maharashtra Government has failed to control suicide of farmers and the communal violence. It did not offer proportionate representation to minorities, specially Muslims in this Assembly Election. Despite its earlier promises, it did not implement the findings of Sri Krishna Commission. The government also paved the way to remove the MCOCA on the Malegaon blast accused Sadhvi Pragya Singh and files an affidavit against the CBI inquiry of Hari Masjid firing case in the Supreme Court…Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Maharashtra will assess the situation of every constituency, will discuss it with the local people and will support the Strong Secular Candidate, who held high moral values and who will be in agreement with the Peoples' manifesto released by the Jamaat and try to implement it'.[23]

Appendix 19

M. Sajid speaking on *jahiliya* and political alliances of JIH:

'When you see Islam as an ideology or a comprehensive way of life, then the notion of *jahiliya* actually comes [to the forefront]. Now, the system of *jahiliya* will always be present in its different manifestations. The present manifestation of *jahiliya* is in imperialism. Now, when we talk about broadening the anti-imperialist platform, several non-Muslim elements or who were erstwhile defined as having a *jahil* mentality can be part of an anti-imperialist resistance. But this is in fact rooted in our understanding of Prophet's life. Prophet had very clear enemies. But at the same time, Prophet also utilized several *jahil* people against the main enemy. With practical wisdom, Prophet made an alliance with Jews and Christians against powerful idolaters of Mecca. Making practical alliances with non-Muslims only

[23] http://www.twocircles.net/2009oct06/jamaat_e_islami_support_third_front_maha_assembly_poll.html accessed on 10/10/2009.

arises out of the misconception about "Puritanism". This whole puritan concept that only we: Muslims alone can fight against any injustice is not present in Islam. The concept of alliances is present throughout Islamic history and these alliances were not only between purely likeminded people. Rigid Puritanism is very much absent in Islam'.[24]

Appendix 20

The People's manifesto of JIH before 2009 Lok Sabha Elections put forward the following demands on the issue of 'Security':

'(i) Implement all the directives of Supreme Court of India regarding Police Reforms and reserve 25 per cent positions at all levels of Police force for minorities to ascertain unbiased policing (ii) An exclusive Anti-Riot Act should be promulgated that will ensure (a) Stringent punishment for hate speeches and writings, communal riots, inciting for communal killings and other such crimes (b) Permanent Tribunal to investigate riots and terror incidents with full judicial powers (c) Punishment to law and order authorities failing to act honestly and judiciously to control the riots (iii) Enact a law to make it mandatory to investigate all deaths in police encounters and custodies through a permanent commission with judicial powers (iv) Amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act by removing the provisions of detention without bail and 3 years imprisonment for withholding information (v) Enquire by a high level commission, all the terrorist activities, explosions and encounters held in last 10 years (vi) All those arrested in any case should undergo trials within a period of one month (vii) Those persons acquitted after long time of imprisonment, finding no evidence against them should be sufficiently compensated (viii) Take actions against those convicted by Sri Krishna Commission and implement the recommendation of the commission (ix) Check the human rights violations by the security forces in Kashmir and North Eastern region and [severely] punish the perpetrators'.[25]

[24] Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.

[25] http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=459 accessed on 05/10/09.

Appendix 21

The campaign folder of JIH that was distributed before the public rally on 18th November, 2008 in Kolkata featured the following demands:

1) All riots and terrorist attacks of the last decade should be probed by an independent high powered commission to identify the actual culprits, and the report of this enquiry should be made public. 2) Reforms should be initiated in the Police and Law Enforcement machinery and the recommendations of National Police Commission should be immediately implemented. At least 25 per cent Police personnel at all levels should belong to minority communities. 3) Effective legal mechanism should be evolved to check Police atrocities, illegal detentions, fake encounters, tortures and custodial deaths, and fabricated accusations. 4) Harassment of relatives and well wishers of the detainees should be stopped and a whole locality should not be targeted or victimized. 5) Confidential reports and confessions extracted under duress must not be leaked to the media. Effective regulations and legal mechanism should be enacted to ensure fair and unbiased reporting in media. 6) All efforts for undemocratic and unjust legislation should be stopped, and all those laws in states should be cancelled where confessions in police custody is made admissible in courts that allow police to keep persons arrested without filing charge sheets.

Appendix 22

The detailed response of JIH leader S.Q.R. Illiyas on the issue of Muta:

'As far as Muta or temporary marriage is concerned, it is only one provision among the Shia sect. There are no other Muslims who approve this practice. Even in Shiite Iran, that is not permitted now. Muta is however permitted among Shias only in certain conditions. For example, when Arabs were going to the West for studies, some Arab scholars gave the permission that they can marry a western woman. If they would not have provisioned Muta in that context, they fear that they would indulge in un-Islamic acts like adultery and fornication. So, to prevent the *haram* (forbidden) *zana* (adultery/fornication), they gave permission for Muta or temporary marriage to a western woman but they cannot bring the western woman back to their country. So, that was done to prevent a greater evil although there were many *ulemas* (Islamic theologians/scholars) who objected to this permission of Muta. In fact, there is no example

of Muta marriage neither during Prophet's lifetime nor in the case of any *Sahaba* (immediate followers of Prophet)'.[26]

Appendix 23

A press note of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind that summarizes its position on the issue of Taslima Nasrin controversy:

'Jamaat-e-Islami Hind's provisional General Secretary, Mr Ghulam Akbar condemned in hardest manner, the central government's decision to extend the visa period of mischievous and anti-national Taslima Nasrin. He said that the decision was unwise and like mocking the sentiments of the principled and religious traditions of Indians, especially Muslims. He demanded [that] the government [must] not hurt the [sentiments of] the real citizens of the country for the sake of a foreign controversial lady. He also demanded to retract the decision [of the government] and [that the government must not] permit her to live further in India'.[27]

Appendix 24

A Press note of JIH quoting its Secretary General summarizes its position on homosexuality:

'Jamaat-e-Islami Hind has deplored the Delhi High Court verdict legalizing gay sex among consenting adults, and urged the Central government to make necessary legislation to nullify this judgment. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind is shocked and perturbed over the scraping of section 377 of IPC by Delhi Court. This judgement hurts the religious feelings of millions of people of India and is a setback to moral values and family system…It is not a question of merely scraping of section 377 of IPC but it is an attack on the moral and religious fabric of our society. Almost all religions consider homosexuality as a dreadful sin and social evil which leads towards the societal disintegration and breaking up the family…The homosexuality is also injurious to health as it leads to spreading of HIV+/AIDS. Jamaat has called upon the government to challenge this judgment in [the] apex court to restore the

[26] Interview with Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.

[27] http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=37&pageid=289 accessed on 21/10/2009.

dignity of humanity and confidence of the people who are shocked and disturbed by this judgment. [The Jamaat feels] that if this [judgment is] not nullified, [then] it would spoil the very foundation of the society i.e. family system'.[28]

Appendix 25

The opposition to gay rights is expressed in a press statement of SIO, issued from New Delhi on July 3, 2009 in the following words:

'Deleting anti sodomy law will lead to more anti-social activities and will cripple the HIV/AIDS prevention efforts…[T]omorrow, on the guise of "right to personal liberty", incest and sex with animals would also be legalized…Gay and lesbianism are against basic humanitarian values and against the social fabric of a civilized society. No person is born homosexual, just like no one is born a thief, a liar or murderer. These evil habits are acquired from surroundings. The agenda of homosexuals is just to universalize their behavior and make the notion that it's normal. It is extremely sad to see that instead of trying to implement measures to curb heinous and uncultured practices, even courts are legalizing them. SIO has a principled stand against counter-values being promoted by market forces…SIO would raise fundamental debates on morality and sexuality'.[29]

Appendix 26

A press statement of SIO issued from New Delhi on 'Education Reform' dated June 28, 2009:

'Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal should not be in hurry [for] major shifts in education system [like] doing away with the Class X board exams, setting up of a single school board at the national level, winding up of the University Grants Commission. [O]pening up FDI in the education sector [and all the above mentioned policy matters] must be made after consultation and debates…By allowing private investment including from abroad, in education, the state must not abandon

[28] http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=37&pageid=479 accessed on 21/10/2009.

[29] http://sio-india.org/press/deleting-anti-sodomy-law-will-encourage-more-anti-social-activities-sio accessed on 26/11/2009.

its role as a social welfare guarantor to every section of the society. Before making public his intent to invite foreign direct investment (FDI) in education, one must think, why reputed Universities like Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard is not coming to India? It's the duty of government to regulate the entry and also the fees of profit based foreign education providers, reserve seats for socially and economically backward class and protect students from receiving sub-standard education offered by foreign institutions. FDI can only be welcomed to develop the educational standard of the country but not treating education as 'industry'. In India, institutions of higher learning like the IITs, the IIMs, JNU, and most reputable medical and engineering colleges are government-owned. So we strongly believe that education… in a developing country like ours will be served, both qualitatively and quantitatively, if only the state itself seriously consider education as an important social activity. Before taking any major reform in Madrassa education - major Muslim organisations, Madrassa teachers, [and] students must be consulted to arrive at a consensus'.[30]

Appendix 27

JIH leader, K.K. Zuhaira summarizes the viewpoint of women's wing and GIO in the following words:

'Islamic Sharia and Muslim Personal Law should be made aware in the near future regarding misconceptions about divorce and polygamy in Islam. We are going to organize some more conferences in the coming years for women on these issues. A lot of misconception about women and Islam is also prevalent among non-Muslims. We need to review and correct those misconceptions. Muslim Personal Law Board should run according to Islamic Sharia. The strong support base of Jamaat among women in Kerala is because of some key reasons. Jamaat started its special campaign and dawa (religious missionary activities) among women in Kerala right from 1950s and particularly stressed on women's education, which resulted in Jamaat's strong organizational presence among women. In this respect, there should be more women's representation both in Kerala Jamaat leadership and central leadership in Delhi. We have not yet taken the decision on the issue of women's reservation bill in parliament but Jamaat would definitely take the decision in the light of Quran and Sunnah. However, I am in favour of women's reservation. Muslim women should get more education and should also work

[30] http://sio-india.org/press/education-reform-must-not-be-made-without-debates-and-discussions-sio accessed on 26/11/2009.

independently. The Islamic Sharia never imposes any restriction on the issue of jobs for women. If there is safety and security for women in the workplace, then obviously they should work more. There is no bar on women's work neither in Islam nor in Jamaat'.[31]

Appendix 28

JIH's rhetoric of Islam as an alternative and universal ideology:

'The way of life that Prophet Muhammad taught mankind has, thus, been universal in character. It is by no means a property of those who are born in Muslim families. It is a Religion for all mankind, sent by one God, Who is the Lord of them all. It is through faithful acceptance of the Message and sincere and whole-hearted adherence to it in practice that a man becomes true Muslim (i.e., submissive to God) and not by the mere accident of birth…We admit that the statement of the ideology of Islam and its practical demands…are hardly corroborated by a study of existing Muslim societies. It is indeed regrettable that the true Islamic society is nowhere in evidence. Muslims of today generally fail to live up to the noble dictates of Islam. But we submit that it would be equally unfortunate if this failure were interpreted as a reflection on the inadequacy of Divine Guidance…Even now despite our long drawn antagonism to Western Imperialism, we as a nation are engaged in assimilating the essence of all that is good in the Western civilisation. Communism and Socialism, essentially foreign ideologies, are passionately advocated by those of our countrymen who are convinced of their relevance to our present conditions. Given this attitude, Islam as a social order has greater claims to unprejudiced consideration. It restates the fundamental teachings of all previous Divinely revealed Scriptures in a complete and reliable manner, shedding all additions and innovations that had become associated with Divine Guidance through the vicissitudes of history. It does not repudiate a single preceding Prophet of God, nor does it controvert the teachings of anyone of them but accepts them all as the galaxy of Divine Messengers, and as links of the same chain. If Muslims have faith in the efficacy of Islam, which has been a potent force for the good of mankind throughout the ages, it is not only the necessary demand of their faith, but also their altruistic duty to propagate its principles, especially at a time when the country is in search of a stable basis for building the edifice of its life'.[32]

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[31] Field interview with K.K. Zuhaira on 13/01/2009.

[32] http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=124&blockid=31 accessed on 09/11/2009.

Appendix 29

Jamaat leader Dr. S.Q.R. Illiyas on Caravan for Justice and Peace:

'When we decided to take out a caravan for peace and justice, our approach was three dimensional. First, we urged the Muslim community not to be demoralized. They should not feel alienated and so our caravan was morale boosting and confidence building exercise for the Muslim community. Secondly, we wanted to expose those forces, which are creating troubles like the RSS and even the ruling classes. Thirdly, we wanted to raise the real issue by asking why the people of this country are not getting justice. Despite last 60 years of independence there are more than 35 per cent of the population - not getting their daily livelihood, 40 per cent people are still illiterate. Dalits, Tribals and Women are all facing similar problems like the Muslims. But nobody is coming forward to address these issues. So, through this caravan, we tried to send the message that the system is responsible for the problems of the common man. Whatever resources we are earning, most money is going to the hands of few people and rest of the population is left out to poverty. So, India is not shining and GDP growth rate does not talk about shining India, it only shows how the corporate groups are progressing'.[33]

Appendix 30

The 'pro-people' rhetoric of SYM in its pamphlet:

'Youths have a vital role in the overall cultural, educational, material and spiritual growth of all people including workers, farmers, tribals and other downtrodden and marginalized sections, minorities etc. Solidarity treads the path of this revolutionary task in the supreme Light of Divine Guidance and in accordance with the liberation model enacted by the Prophets aiming for success and welfare in life before and after death for all people…Words and slogans fortified by apt deeds—this is how Solidarity marches forth. Struggle and service are inextricable elements in its work culture. It strongly points its one hand towards the injustices of the elite classes while at the same time engaging the other arm in providing support to the voiceless poor and destitute…If you are also ready to speak out against injustice, irrespective of all differences in caste and creed, and if you are

[33] Interview with Dr S.Q.R. Illiyas, 03/12/2008.

ready to wipe the tears from the eyes of the poor and helpless, then you are also part of Solidarity'.[34]

Appendix 31

Some Political Demands in the JIH People's Manifesto 2009:

'**Social Justice: (a)** Ensure immediate tabling of Justice Ranganath Misra Commission report in the Parliament, full implementation of its basic recommendations, namely, 15 per cent reservation for the minorities, with 10 per cent exclusively for the Muslims, along with the unutilized portion of the other 5 per cent, and the deletion of para 3 of the Constitution (SC) Order 1950, issued under Article 341 of the Constitution for the inclusion of Muslims and Christian Dalits in the SC list (b) Repeal draconian laws in the guise of curbing terrorism in all states. e.g. UAPA, MCOCA and Armed forces Special Power Act etc. (c) Ensure reservation in public employment and higher education, benefits of social development and flow of resources for the Muslims in proportion to their population and level of backwardness (d) Diversity Index should be introduced as recommended by Sachar Committee in all public and private sectors and all government incentives should be linked with it (e) Establish Equal Opportunity Commission as recommended by Sachar Committee (f) Make sub plans for Muslims in central and state plans and schemes and allocate budgets on par with SC and ST for such sub plans (g) All the allocations and schemes provided for Minorities concentrated districts should be specific to the developments of minorities in that particular region (h) Provide all basic amenities to tribals in Tribal and Forest Land without affecting their culture and customs (i) Ensure development of basic needs and other infrastructure in Kashmir and North Eastern states (j) While allocating tickets for party candidates for Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Assembly, Council and Municipal elections, it should be ensured that each community gets proportionate representation. **Women:** (a) A separate quota should be provided to OBC's and Minorities in the proposed 33 per cent reservations for women in legislature (b) Women should be exempted from working in night shifts in Govt. and private services except in hospitals (c) Enact law to stop the exploitation of female employees in MNCs and Call Centers (d) Stringent laws should be enacted to punish those involved in harassment of

[34] Excerpts from Solidarity Youth Movement pamphlet titled: 'Oceans without waves' collected on 02/12/2008.

women (e) Appoint a commission to study the menace of foeticide and social, legal, medical and scientific measures to curb it and implement its recommendations (f) Enact a law to check social misconduct and intolerance towards girl child. **Public Accountability:** A massive campaign should be launched to effectively check the criminalization of politics and rising corruption in government machinery. For this, (a) Ticket should not be given to any candidate with criminal records, i.e. convicted or charge-sheeted in a court of law (b) Veerappa Moily Commission's recommendations regarding bureaucratic reforms and increasing the punishment for bribery should be implemented (c) Transparency in government functioning should be increased through effective implementation of RTI and e-governance measures. **Waqf:** The Waqf properties should be organized in a way as to make it more productive and optimum resources generating for their intended purpose. For this, (i) Waqf Board will be given an autonomous status with full and legally established administrative powers (ii) Waqf Act should be amended to add the following features: (a) Compulsory Survey of all Waqf Properties after pre-defined fixed period and notification of Survey Report in official gazette (b) Make all the information about all the Waqf properties available on internet (c) Compulsory auction if any property is to be given on lease (d) Exemption of Waqf Properties from Land Acquisition Act etc. (e) All illegal occupations and encroachments on Waqf properties should be freed. **Other Reforms:** (a) Bring constitutional provision that no international treaty can be signed without the consent of the parliament (b) Simplify the procedures for OBC certificate (c) Introduce a new fast and easier mechanism to register all voters of the country with photo identity cards so that no body will loose the opportunity of casting their democratic rights (d) Repeal the anti conversion laws in various states (e) End the system of colloquium for selection of judges and introduce merit and reservation based selection of judges (f) Darul Qazas operating in different parts of the country should be provided legal status under ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism) (g) Provide statuary status to NHRC, NCM and NWC'.[35]

Appendix 32

Muslim Community Issues in JIH Policy & Programme:

'**(Under Article 3 of the Policy)** (A) Educational and economic backwardness

[35] http://www.jamaateislamihind.org/index.php?do=category&id=102&pageid=459 accessed on 05/10/2009.

of Muslims is a matter of deep concern; even the government has recognized the gravity of the situation. In this connection, the Jamaat shall endeavour :- (i) That the government undertakes all necessary measures to remove Muslims' backwardness and in particular, provides them reasonable safeguards in education and employment. (ii) That Muslims on their own implement a comprehensive plan to overcome their backwardness in these fields. (iii) That they develop the habit of extraordinary hard work, cultivate academic and technical skills and work for economic consolidation in the light of Islamic principles. That they are motivated to benefit from the government schemes, within permissible limits. (B) The Jamaat shall endeavour that :- (i) Impact of western values and fascist tendencies on the educational system be checked and reversed. (ii) Muslims be inspired to develop unity among themselves to counter the challenges posed to their security and safety and their religious and cultural identity. Instead of falling prey to sectarian tendencies and petty disputes, Muslims would be encouraged to work unitedly for the important common causes. (iii) Muslims be motivated to organize Zakat and Ushr (collection and distribution) on a collective basis. (iv) Muslims be motivated to take necessary measures collectively, within the legal and Shariah limits, to protect and defend themselves against the assaults on their life, property, honour and dignity; and seek the cooperation of all just people in this regard. (v) Waqf properties be protected and their income properly utilized. The government and the mutawallis be called upon to discharge their duties. (vi) Effective steps be undertaken to counter Qadianism and apostasy'.[36]

Appendix 33

Ex-SYM President and Jamaat ideologue, M. Sajid speaks on OBC Muslim reservation in Kerala:

'We have led many struggles on minority issues like reservation. Among the minority issues that we concentrated in Kerala was about the Narendran Commission which looks into the actual (implementation of) reservation (for) Muslims. In Kerala, 99 per cent Muslims are included in Other Backward Classes [OBC] category. So, the benefit of OBC reservation is theoretically available to Muslims. But because of malpractices and biasness by the politician-bureaucracy nexus for upper caste people, Muslims and other lower classes are denied of getting practical benefits out of reservation in jobs. So, Narendran Committee was appointed to look into

[36] *JIH Policy and Programme*, pp 15-16.

the details of this issue and it was revealed by the same committee that nearly 9000 posts were lost by Muslims which were actually due to them. So, we took this issue and made very strong political intervention. We demanded to fill up the vacant posts for Muslims as soon as possible. We believe that in 2006 Assembly election, the Congress led UDF got a severe electoral blow from the Muslims mainly because of this Narendran Commission Report. In Kerala, there is 12 per cent reservation for Muslim OBCs. So, what we are demanding is that the Muslims should get the exact 12 per cent reservation that is stipulated for them. Why the reserved posts for Muslims would remain vacant? Here we are just demanding two things: a) the fulfillment of the present 12 per cent Muslim quota by filling up present vacancies for Muslims and b) fulfillment of those posts by Muslims which due to malpractices were lost to Muslims as others have filled up those posts'[37]

Appendix 34

The central emphasis on Islamic *Ummah* as the harbinger of Islamic revolution or establishment of Islam while fighting against 'non-Islamic' ideologies can be traced in the JIH programme in following words:

'The saddest aspect of the Muslim situation is their ignorance of their lofty status. They have forgotten, by and large, that they are Khair-e-Ummah (the best of communities) whose duty is to become "witnesses of truth" by their word and deed. This ignorance has reduced Muslims to the status of merely "a community among many" that exists in the world. They do not realize that actually they are benefactors and guides of the entire humanity…Muslims have fallen prey to petty differences because they are indifferent to their status and basic duty. Instead of being one united ummah, they are getting fragmented into groups and there are indications that sectarian strife is being encouraged by anti-Islamic forces to weaken the Muslim ummah. This opportunity to anti-Islamic forces has been provided by Muslims themselves, due to their ignorance of their mission. In these circumstances, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind deems it necessary to awaken the deep sense of being "Khair-e-Ummah" in the Muslims. Muslims must subject themselves to tough and impartial introspection and launch a campaign to reform themselves. They should unite and become "Witnesses of truth" and march towards the goal of Iqamat-e-Deen (establishment of Islamic religion)'.[38]

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[37] Interview with M. Sajid, 02/12/2008.

[38] *JIH Policy and Programme*, pp 7-8.

Appendix 35

Interview with Professor Choudhury Mahmood Hasan, Faculty of Pharmacy, Dhaka University:

'Islam versus non-Islam is the major contradiction in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the Muslim world. We are more under attack for the 1971 position vis-à-vis Bangladesh Liberation Movement. Jamaat might have done strategic mistakes like Ikhwan in Egypt but there is no doubt that as an ideological movement, it has been able to penetrate among the educated persons by renewing the original concepts of Islam. Jamaat has been able to emerge as a political force in Bangladesh with inspiration from Iran and Afghanistan's Islamic regimes. The main contribution of Jamaat towards Islamisation in Bangladesh is that in the public discourses, at least a big section of population including educated and political leadership thinks that Islam is a complete code of life. This recognition of Islam as a totalistic religion and a complete way of life is a significant contribution of Jamaat. However, in terms of establishing Islam or to make it functional, there is doubt among those very constituents of population, i.e. the educated persons and the political leadership'.[39]

Appendix 36

Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on the issue of BNP-Jamaat alliance:

'BNP is not an ideological party. It is a motley combination of varied ideological people of rightists, centrists and leftists. Although, it is a rightwing nationalist party and does not believe in socialism but only believes in democracy, yet they have given space to lot of erstwhile leftist leaders like Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, ex-Secretary General of BNP during Khaleda Zia's jail term. Mannan Bhuiyan has been expelled from BNP after his revolt against Khaleda. Also, the question of honesty and corruption is the major difference between Jamaat and BNP. However, pragmatic ground reality of electoral politics only compels both the Jamaat and the BNP to make electoral alliances against the Awami League'.[40]

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[39] Field Interview with Professor Choudhury Mahmud Hasan, Faculty of Pharmacy, Dhaka University on 04/06/2009.

[40] Field Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on 02/06/2009.

Appendix 37

Interview of a Jamaat intellectual on reasons behind the Electoral debacle of Bangladesh Jamaat in 2008:

'Major reason of BNP-Jamaat setback in the 2008 National Parliament elections is because of the corruption of BNP, which was exposed by the military backed caretaker government. All the charges of corruption were not true but definitely some were true. Also, the media was more in favour of the Awami League. Moreover, the military backed caretaker government helped the Awami League to win the election in a pre-planned manner. Although, Awami League would have won in any case because of rampant corruption of BNP but the big margin was due to coordinated help of the caretaker government to the Awami League. On the other hand, BNP is not an ideological party like the Awami League and the Jamaat. BNP is a curious mixture of all sorts of left, right and centrist people whereas Awami League had an ideological legacy even before Liberation. In this election, Awami was more matured in appealing to the common voters, denying tickets to those who have been charged with corruption cases while giving more freedom to its alliance partners like Jatiyo Party. Finally, public memory in Bangladesh is very weak. It is more concerned with the last incumbent government than the misdeeds of previous governments'.[41]

Appendix 38

Defensive statements about Anti-Liberation image of Jamaat by a Jamaat Member:

'We have fear of repression when initiating political mass movements. Also, we are more defensive regarding the anti-independence image of Jamaat propagated by the mainstream political parties. There is an inferiority complex among Jamaat on this issue and we also have shortage of effective leadership. Today, the Jamaat is facing a leadership crisis'.[42]

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41 Field interview with Professor Omar Faruq in the Department of Islamic History and Culture, Dhaka University on 03/06/2009.

42 Field interview with Jamaat member Safiuddin Sheikh on 04/06/2009.

Appendix 39

Field Interview with Professor Choudhury Mahmood Hasan:

'If Jamaat can resolve the 1971 issue by declaring that it had committed a political mistake at that time then we can perpetually make-up our tarnished image. After all, people pardon political confessions if it is justifiable. The Jamaat MPs were always very popular among the masses although such popularity is a localized phenomenon and fail to become a national wave for Islam as our electoral experiences show. Jamaat also lack a rich intellectual and research cell. Jamaat can successfully rally a big section of anti-Indian and anti-Awami population when BNP would be weak. This is a real possibility in the long run since BNP would be disintegrated after Khaleda Zia. BNP is a loosely ideological and a disorganized party. So our current crisis of political mobilization can be only overcomed with the successful weakening of BNP as the only platform for anti-India and anti-Awami sentiments'.[43]

Appendix 40

Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on Intellectual leadership in Jamaat:

'Jamaat people are more soft and less vocal in nature. Mostly they are not professional organizers like other political parties. Another serious problem is lack of intellectual contribution to the Jamaat organisation to make it a sharper ideological movement'.[44]

Appendix 41

Interview with Jamaat intellectual Professor Omar Faruq:

'The character of Islamist movement of Jamaat is fundamentally different from other mainstream political parties. For example, in Bangladesh, most teachers

[43] Field Interview with Professor Choudhury Mahmud Hasan, Faculty of Pharmacy, Dhaka University on 04/06/2009.

[44] Field Interview with A.T.M. Fazlul Haque on 02/06/2009.

in the universities are associated with university politics, mainly for vested interests like housing facilities, and other benefits like posts and promotions and not for larger social cause. We are not involved in placing any charter of demands for teachers in front of the Vice-Chancellors because we know from our past experiences that those would not be fulfilled. Our organization is weak in Dhaka University, which is mainly depended on personal relations and network building. We generally issue press statements on national and international issues. We cannot initiate large-scale movements because people will not join us. We also do not have the mental strength for such large-scale movements among the university teachers, academics and intellectuals. We have the fear of repression on the excuse of linking Jamaat to terrorism, a myth that has been created by mainstream political parties'.[45]

Appendix 42

A very senior leader of Indian Jamaat, Maulana Shafi Moonis expressed his views about Islamist movement in South Asia in following words:

'As far as South Asia is concerned, common people in Afghanistan and Bangladesh have been traditionally very religious in their private lives and thus ripe for vibrant Islamic movement. Ghulam Azam played an important role in Bangladesh Islamic movement. I am particularly hopeful about the prospects of Islamic movement in Bangladesh than Pakistan because of the strong presence of feudal zamindari class in Pakistan and the absence of this class in Bangladesh. This feudal class is generally more attracted to various pleasures, which are un-Islamic and therefore, would hinder a relatively equitable and just Islamic state'.[46]

[45] Field interview with Jamaat member Professor Omar Faruq in the Department of Islamic History and Culture, Dhaka University on 03/06/2009.

[46] Field interview with senior Jamaat leader Shafi Moonis on 01/12/2008.

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Index

Access-Controlled High-Speed Corridor Project, 129
Adib-Moghaddam, Arshin, 19–20
Agwani, M. S., 64
Ahl-i-Hadith movement, 180
Ahmed, Akbar, 49
Ahmed, Justice Shahabuddin, 218
Ahmed, Raisuddin, 146
Alhle-e-Hadees, 113
Ali, Maulana Karamat, 181
Ali, Maulana Wilayet, 180
Ali, Mawlana Inayat, 180
Ali, Syed Ameer, 181
Ali, T. Arif, 135, 137, 144
All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM), 108
All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF), 108
Al-Qaeda, 6–7, 51
al-Rāwandī, Ibn, 17
al-Rāzī (Rhazes), Abu Bakr, 17
Al-Sadr, Moqtada, 30
American imperialism, 31, 120
  protests against, 106–107, 124–125
  vs Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), 111
Amin, Samir, 11–13, 29, 46, 55, 187–188
Ansari, M. A., 105
Anti-Cola Agitation Committee, 129
anti-inflationary fiscal responsibility, 22
anti-Orientalist view of Islam, 48–50
anti-Shah movement, 31
Arab-Islamic specificity, 11–12
Aristotle, 86
articulation, 10–11
Asad, Abul, 204
Asad, Talal, 20, 42, 72
Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal, 15, 29
'available'/'availability,' concept of, 10
Awami League, 175–179, 184, 187–188, 195, 199, 204, 212, 219, 226, 230–232
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam, 105
Azam, Ghulam, 176, 194, 208, 218, 221 , 232, 247-248

Baathist regime of Iraq, 18
Babri Masjid Action Committee, 108
Babri mosque demolition, 106
Bandung Conference, 31
Bangladesh
  altered status quo, politics of, 189
  anti-Ershad movement, 176–177
  anti-Indian sentiments in, 233–234
  Constitution of, 176
  disinvestment of profit-making 'state-owned enterprises,' 201
  failure of Left movement in, 178–179
  inclusion and exclusion, politics of, 188
  Islam as a political symbol in, 175–178
  Islamic symbols in Bangladeshi politics, 179
  Islamist parties in, 204
  Islamist populism in, 230–234
  Jamaat's intervention, 190–199
  Kemalist project of Mujibism, 184–187
  Mujibism, 15, 18, 170–175
  Muslim peasantry, 181–182
  political culture of secularism, 194–196
  political economy factors and rise of Islamism, 179–180

politico-ideological discourses in, 187–190
prominence of Islamism in, 180–184
prominence of Jamaati Islamism in, 172
Rakhi Bahini, 173
secular fabric of, 176
social transformation, politics of, 189
Bangladeshi nationalism, 186
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, 199. *see also* Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH); Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh
antagonism of, 196
anti-'Western' cultural globalization, 210–212
Bangladesh parliamentary elections, performance of, 213–215, 217–221, 226–227
ban on Taslima's writings, 210–212
capital friendly trade-unionism of, 208
constructing antagonistic frontiers and politics of 'Islamic alternative,' 190–198
election manifesto of, 207
Ershad's New Industrial Policy and, 203
foreign policy, 209
funding, 205–206
issues of 'free sex,' 'nudity,' 'obscenity' and 'sexual permissiveness,' 210
labour law reforms, 207–208
leadership, 83
leadership and intellectuals, 205
in mainstream politics, 228
neoliberalist approach, 200–210
notion of secularism, 82
political agenda of, 203–205
politico-ideological articulations of, 212–229
response to Sheikh Mujib's economic policies, 202
social welfare network of, 209
student wing, 202
Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSHAL), 173
Bangladesh Liberation Movement, 1971, 19, 198
Bangladesh Muslim League, 213
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), 171, 179, 187–188, 198–199, 204, 211, 218, 220–226, 230, 302
Bangladesh parliamentary elections
1979 election, 214–215
1986 election, 215–216
1991 election, 217–218
1996 election, 219–220
2001 election, 221–222
2008 election, 222, 231, 301–302
2014 election, 222–226
1973 elections, 213
1978 presidential election, 215
voter turnout, 218–219, 223, 225
Bangladesh Sramik Kalyan Federation (BSKF), 207
Barelvi movement, 36
Barkat, Abul, 206
Bengali language movement after partition, 171
Bengali nationalism, 186
Bhabha, Homi, 18, 26
Bhashani, Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan, 181
Bhutto, Zulfiqar Ali, 30, 194
Bilgrami, Akeel, 107
Blair, Tony, 23
blasphemy and 'insult to Prophet,' Islamism against, 150, 253–259
Buck-Morss, Susan, 50
bureaucratic socialism, 53

capitalistic developmental project, 134
Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006, 98
Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), 137
Chakrabarty, Dipesh, 90, 166
Chatterjee, Partha, 99
Choueiri, Youssef M., 36–37, 72
Chowdhury, Abu Syeed, 213
Clinton, Bill, 23
Coastal Management Zone Act (CMZ Act), 129–130
Coastal Regulation Zone Act (CRZ Act), 130
Coca Cola plant of Plachimada, issues with, 127–129, 286–287
colonial and post-colonial regimes, Islamist response, 35–46
Communist Party of India (Marxist), 105, 129, 135
comparative fundamentalisms, 43, 45
Comte, Auguste, 90
cultural erosion, Islamic, 34–35
cultural identities, Islamic, 35–36
cultural relativists, 43

Dahl, Robert, 86
Danish cartoon controversy, 253–255, 257
democracy, Islamic, 44
Devji, Faisal, 112–113, 254–256
discourse of an order, 10
Durkheim, Émile, 90

Endosulfan rehabilitation programme, 131–132
Enlightenment, 16
equality, 7, 57, 111, 115, 273
  rhetoric of, 110
Ershad, General Hussain Muhammad, 171, 174–178, 187, 200, 203, 215-218, 226, 228
Esposito, John L., 41, 43, 47
Euro-American neoliberalism, 26–27
Euro-American world, 13
Eurocentric Orientalism, 56
Eurocentrism, 11–12, 187
European Renaissance, 16
European superiority, 11
extremist Islamists, 6–7

faith in Islamic religion, 6
Faraizi movement, 36, 180
Farooq, Mujtaba, 66, 135–136, 157
Faruq, Omar, 303–304
folk Islam, 34
Fordist–Keynesian accumulation regime, 21
Foucault, Michel, 50
free markets, 20–21
free trade, 20
Freeden, Michael, 7–8, 21, 25, 243
Freud, Sigmund, 90
Friedman, Milton, 21, 24
fundamentalism, 54
  as an analytical category, 4
  comparative, 43, 45
  features of, 4
  modernity and, 4
  in a Muslim context, coinage and usage of, 2–5

Galloway, George, 133
German ordo-liberalism, 25
Girl's Islamic Organisation (GIO), 153
Gorkha agitation, 146
Great Depression of 1930s, 21
Gupta, J. B. Das, 64

Halliday, Fred, 46, 56
Hamas, 6, 30-31, 55, 126
Haq, A. K. Fazlul, 181
Haq, Maulana Muzammilull, 113
Haque, A. T. M. Fazlul, 197–198, 205, 301, 303
Harman, Chris, 46
Harrisons Malayalam Limited, issue of land acquisition, 137–138
Hasan, Choudhury Mahmood, 198, 301, 303
Hashim, Abul, 181
Hasina, Sheikh, 220
Hayek, Friedrich August von, 21, 24
hegemony, 14
  in contemporary India and Bangladesh, 14–15
  in Gramscian sense, 14
  structure of hegemonic power, 14
Hezbollah, 6–7, 30, 55, 114, 142
Hindutva, 54, 82, 92–93, 108, 141–142, 146–147, 152, 160, 165, 235–237, 265
homogenous Islamism, 43
Huntington, Samuel, 44
Hussain, T. K., 137

Ibnae Qadeem Deoband, 113
'ideologization' of Islamic religion, 8–9
Ikamat-e-Deen, 144
Illiyas, S. Q. R., 124, 135, 144–145, 147–150, 152, 156, 291, 296
imperialism, 31–32, 54–58, 139
  capitalistic mode of, 134
  imperialist globalization, 55
Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), 108
Indo-US nuclear deal, criticism of, 125–126, 133–134
Islam
  culturalist interpretations of, 42
  as a 'discursive tradition,' 42
  idealization of, 9
  interpretation of, 10
  Islamist definition, 6
  as a way of life, 6
  worldview, 9
Islamic Democratic League (IDL), 213
Islamic essentialism, 41
Islamic exceptionalism, 43–44
Islamic faith, 44
Islamic feminism, 75–81
Islamic fundamentalism, 2–3, 5, 11, 29, 43–45, 52-55, 77
  essentialist *vs* anti-essentialist representation of, 4
Islami Chattro Shibir (ICS), 202
Islamic identity, 5–7, 192, 257
Islamic metaphoric language, 5
Islamic movements, 2, 20
  categories, 40–46
  class analysis, 45–46
  comparative fundamentalisms, 45
  conservatives and moderates, 42
  contradictory class interests and, 33
  sociological and political economy approaches, 41
  in South Asia, 304
Islamic organizations, 6
  in terms of operational strategies, 6–7
Islamic radicalism, 46
Islamic reformism, 36–37, 181
Islamic revivalism, 3, 36–37, 180
Islamic revolt of Iran in 1979, 179
'Islamic State of Iraq and Syria' (ISIS), 30
Islamic subjectivity, 5
Islamic symbolism, 37
Islamic threat, mythical notion of, 47
Islamic welfare state, 230
Islamism
  academic debates on, 56–58
  academic works on, 5

acts of decontestation, 7–8
anti-modernism of, 36
class bases of, 46
commonalities between postmodernism and, 52–53
contestation between neoliberalism and, 11
contradiction between Islamic universalism/Islamist populism, 1
crisis of, 272–275
as a 'defensive' cultural reaction, 35
in India and Bangladesh, 61
Islamist response to colonial and post-colonial modernity, 35–46
Islamist response to cultural erosion, 34–35
Laclau's theoretical insights, 1
migration and petro-dollar financing, 34
nation-state and, 19–20
neoliberalism and, 20–27, 93, 200–210
of new exploiters, 46
of new middle class, 46
notions of justice, equality or ideal society, 8
of old exploiters, 46
people and populism, 28–30
as a political discourse, 57
political goals, 9
as a political ideology, 1, 7–10
of poor, 46
poststructuralist reading of, 50
'protest ideology' view of, 91
relationship between imperialism and, 31–32, 54–58
in relation to 'Western' modernity and postmodernity, 47–54
rise of, 28–30, 38–40, 54–55
Islamism/Muslim particularism, 108–109, 161–163
Islamist opposition to globalization, 55–56, 113
ban on Nasrin and Rushdie's books, 67, 150–151, 252, 255, 257–258, 292
against 'blasphemy' and 'insult to Prophet,' 150, 253–254, 257
against 'consumerism' and 'materialist culture,' 148–153
criticism to contemporary capitalism, 123
against gay cultureand live-in relationships, 148–153
in India and Bangladesh, 252–272
against political cartoons caricaturing Muslims and Islamic religion, 253
Islamist populism, 1, 28–30, 158–169
in Bangladesh, 230–234
emancipatory politics of counter-hegemony, 163
emphasis on Islamic *Ummah,* 164–166, 260
Laclauian perspective, 158–163, 168–169
politics of particularist demands for and around affirmative action, 161–162
and project of 'Islamic alternative,' 167–168
Islamophobia, 47, 58, 114, 146
national and international context of, 147
Ismail, Salwa, 40–42

jahiliya, concept of, 72, 85, 113, 138–139, 142, 289–290
Jamaat-e-Islami, 6, 10, 19, 30, 62, 132, 135, 148, 175, 177, 187, 189, 217, 235. *see also* Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami; Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH)

as "anti-liberation" and "war criminals," 198
anti-liberation image of, 302
Islamist politics of, 190–198
partition debates, 191–194
rise of, 171
Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), 19, 108. *see also* Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami
acceptance of Indian secularism, 82
agitations and protest demonstrations, 126–127
alliance with the Left Democratic Front (LDF), 135–137
analysis of global financial crisis, 123
anti-Bush protests, 106–107, 124–125, 145
anti-capitalist imperialism campaign, 93, 124, 169, 245, 266–267, 279
anti-imperialist political alliances of, 288–289
anti-Pepsi-Cola agitation, 127–129
anti-terrorist attitude, 144–148
anti-Western politico-ideological manifestation of, 113
ban on Nasrin and Rushdie's books, 67, 150–151, 292
against 'blasphemy' and 'insult to Prophet,' 150
community issues, 156
concerns about security of Muslims as riot victims, 143
construction of antagonistic frontiers against 'non-Islamic ideologies,' 122–124
against 'consumerism' and 'materialist culture,' 148–153
context of justice and peace, 156
crisis of public health and education in India, 280, 283
criticism of Indo-US nuclear deal, 125–126, 133
criticism to contemporary capitalism, 123
critique of globalization, 113
differences between foreign/Western ideologies, 136–137
on economic inflation in India, 284–285
against gay cultureand live-in relationships, 148–153
against government policy of privatization, 111
on Gujarat genocide, 135–136
on Indian foreign policy, 114–115, 278
on interest-free Islamic society, 116–117
Islamic universalism and Muslim particularism, 153–158
issue of development, 127
issue of 'displacement' in contemporary India, 280
issues of growing inequality in India, 279–280
manifesto of, 119–120, 126, 149, 282–285, 290, 297–298
national leadership, 83
opposition to atheism, 151
on policies of 'economic liberalization,' 115–116
policy and programme, 110–112, 156–157, 298–299
political alliances of, 134–139, 289–290
political discourse of Kerala, 127
political programme of a 'Caravan for Peace and Justice,' 145–146
politics of resistance, and, 124–134
position on homosexuality, 148–153, 292

preference for non-Congress and non-BJP secular alternative, 139–142
resistance against (Hindu/majoritarian) communalism and imperialism, 136
rhetoric of, 122–124, 156, 165, 234, 267, 277–278
rhetoric of Islam as an alternative and universal ideology, 295
against 'sex education,' 149
solidarity activities, 127–128, 133, 137
Solidarity Youth Movement (SYM), 117–118, 126–131, 149, 281
Student's Islamic Organization (SIO), 123
teachings of Islam, role in welfare and well-being, 117
vs American imperialism, 111
vs Hindu majoritarian communalism, 139–143
against 'Western culture,' 148–153
Jamaat-e-Islami in India and Bangladesh, literature review, 63–69, 82–86
cases of Islamist assertion, 67
Irfan Ahmad's anthropological work, 65–66
textual and content analyses of primary sources, 84
writings of Maududi, 64–65
Jamiat-I-Ulema-i-Hind, 113
Jamiat-Ulema-i-Hind, 6
Jatiyo Party (JP), 177–179
Jessop, Bob, 22
jouissance, 260
justice, 7, 57, 111, 116, 136
rhetoric of, 110

Kamruzzaman, Md, 231–232
Kandiyoti, Deniz, 80
Kantian, idea of dogmatism, 258
Kashem, Abul, 181
Kemalism, 15–19, 29
in context of Bangladesh, 18
guiding principles of, 16
Kemalist post-colonial regimes, 18
Kemalist project of Mujibism, 184–187
Turkish secularization under, 16
Westphalian system of nation–states and, 17
Kerala textbook controversy, 67, 151–152
Keynesian–Welfarist settlement, 22
Khair-e-Ummah, 300
Khalifa, 44
Khan, Rahmat Ali, 146
Khan, Sayyid Ahmad, 113
Khan, Yahya, 191
Khilafat movement, 182
Khomeini, Ayatollah, 46, 51, 72, 253, 255, 274

Lacan, Jacques, 18, 260
Laclau, Ernesto, 1, 8, 10, 16, 24, 28, 70, 85, 120–121, 158–163, 168, 182–183, 261, 272–273
Laden, Osama bin, 51, 253
Lapidus, Ira, 73
Latif, Nawab Abdul, 181
Lawrence, Bruce, 49
Left movement in Bangladesh, 178–179
liberal capitalism, 53
'liberal citizenship' in a non-Muslim country, 82
Liberhan Commision Report, 106
liberty, 147, 257, 274, 293
absence of, 248
Lokāyata, 16
Lyotard, Jean Francois, 53

Madani, Maulana Hussain Ahmad, 105
Mahdist uprising, 36
Majlis-e-Mushawarat, 108
Majlis-e-Shoora, 153, 205, 231
Mamdani, Mahmood, 32, 36, 48
Marx, Karl, 34, 71, 88–90, 120, 143, 169, 249–251
Maududi, Sayyid Abul A'la, 19, 44, 62, 71–74, 112–113, 142–143, 154, 164–165, 191–196, 203, 239–242, 246–251
Mernissi, Fatima, 77
militant Islam, 2
militant Islamists, 6
Mir, Shahid Titu, 180
modernization, 15–17, 29, 49, 52, 58, 90, 270–271
Moghissi, Haideh, 52, 78–79, 81
Mojaheed, Ali Ahsan Mohammad, 232
Mollah, Abdul Quader, 232
Moonis, Shafi, 145, 234, 304
Mouffe, Chantal, 8, 10, 70, 121, 274
Mujeeb, Mohammad, 105
Mujibism in Bangladesh, 15, 18, 170–175, 183–187
  failure of, 172–175, 183
Mumbai riots of 1992–93, 106
Muslim, definition of, 6
Muslim Brotherhood, 6, 30–31, 46, 148
Muslim identity, 5–7, 192, 257
Muslim League, 191–192
Muslim Personal Law Board, 108
Muslim revivalist movements, 36
Muslim subjectivity, 5
Muslim world, 195
  failure of secular-nationalism in, 32
  Islamist response to authoritarianism in, 32–33
  issues of Western dress and secularism in, 80
  Kemalism in, failure of, 39
  Khomeinian strategy of complete disengagement with Western world, 40
Naga rebellions, 146
Nasrin and Rushdie's books, ban on, 67, 150–151, 252, 255, 257–258, 292
Nasserism in Egypt, 13, 17–18, 29, 178
nationalism, 16, 18
'national populism' in Muslim world, 29–30
National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA, 2005), 98
neo-Cold warriors, 43–44
neoliberal India, contemporary
  aspects of identity, security and equity of the Muslims, 103
  characteristics, 97
  forms of social policy interventions, 98
  Indian Muslim households, socio-economic situation of, 100–103
  Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) position in, 110–121
  management of marginalized groups, 99
  Muslim situation in, 100–105
  Nehruvian model of economic development, 96
  policy regime, 96
  politico-ideological discourses of Islamism, 105–110
neoliberalism, 82, 93, 104–105, 139, 235
  Anglo-American model, 23
  as an ideology, 21
  in Britain and France, 25
  contrasting Indo-Bangladesh experiences, 236–252
  critical and genealogical analysis of, 25
  economic fundamentalism, 21–22
  Euro-American, 26–27
  Euro-American model of, 40

Foucault's concept of neoliberal governmentality, 25
in India and Bangladesh, 26, 200–210
and Islamism, relationship between, 20–27, 93, 200–210
outcome of, 21, 23
in practice, 23–24
of Reagan and Thatcher in 1980s, 24
Nizam-e-Islami (rule of Islam), 44
Nizami, Motiur Rahman, 221, 232
Non-Alignment Movement (NAM), 96
Nyāya Vaisheshika, 17

Occidentalism, 57–58, 275
Ong, Aihwa, 25
ontological enquiries about Islam, 86–94, 121
Islamism as a 'protest ideology,' 92–93
'missionary aspect' of preaching religion, 87
nature of repression of religion, 90
political dimensions, 87
religious fundamentalism, 88
religious ideologies and secularism, 91
Orientalist and neo-Orientalist constructions of Islam, 47–54, 56–57
Ottoman Empire, 17

Padri puritanical movement, 37
Pakistani nationhood, debates on, 191–194
Pakistan People's Party (PPP), 30, 194
Pan-Islam, 2
Parekh, Bikhu, 257
parliamentary Islamists, 6
Pipes, Daniel, 44
political economic practices, theory of, 20
political Islam, 3, 5, 43
politico-ideological discourses among Indian Muslims, 105–110
composite nationalism, 105
Leftwing Muslims, 105–106
liberal-secular Muslims, 110
Muslim moderates, 105
political leadership among Muslims, 107–108
politics of particularism, 108–109
progressive political articulations, 109–110
protests against American imperialism, 106–107
theo-political articulation, 108
politico-ideological discourses in Bangladesh, 187–190
postmodern view of Islamism, 52–53
prejudicial view of Muslims, 48
Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), 146
private property rights, 20
Private University Act (PRUA), 203
progressive Westernization, 11
Pūrva Mīmāmsā, 16

radical Islam, 2, 49
radical Islamism, 66
Rahim, Mawlana Abdur, 213
Rahman, Sheikh Mujibur/Mujib, Sheikh, 15, 170-173, 176, 181, 183, 194, 202, 212, 214, 268
Ranganath Misra Commission Report, 104
renewal nationalism, 186
Right to Education Act (2009), 98
Right to Information Act (2005), 98
Rome Treaty of the International Criminal Court, 115

Sachar Report, 100–102, 104
Said, Edward W., 48, 58
Sajid, M., 281, 286–290, 299
Samaddar, Ranabir, 175
Sāmkhya, 17
Sanyal, Kalyan, 99
Sayedee, Delwar Hossain, 232
secularism, 16–18
secular-nationalism, 30
secular-nationalism, model of, 15
secular–nationalist regime of Sheikh Mujib, 172–175
Sen, Amartya, 52
Shah, Reza, 17
Shah Bano case, 67, 104, 150, 264
Shaheb, Major M. Abdul Mannan, 205
Shangha, Chhatra, 191
Shariatullah, Haji, 180
Sharqi, Bishruddin, 146
Sheikh, Safiuddin, 231
Shia organizations, 113
Solidarity Youth Movement (SYM), 117–118, 149, 281
  'anti-communalism' and 'antiimperialism' stance of, 287–288
  anti-imperialist assertion of, 286
  Coca Cola agitation by, 127–129
  Endosulfan rehabilitation programme, 131–132
  M. Sajid, interview with, 281, 286–290, 299
  opposition to Kerala Express Highway project, 287
  in organizing agitations and protest demonstrations, 126–129, 285–286
  'pro-people' rhetoric of, 296
  rhetoric of, 156
  unwarranted accusations of 'anti-developmentalism,' 131
Spencer, Herbert, 90
Sri Krishna Commission Report, 106
Student's Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), 66–67, 142, 147
Student's Islamic Organization (SIO), 123, 142, 146, 149, 152–153, 293
Suhrawardy, Huseyn Shaheed, 181
Swatantra Matsyathozhilali Federation, 128
Tablighi Jamaat, 6, 63
Taliban, 6–7, 30–31, 179, 227
Tariqah-i-Muhammadiyah movement, 180
theoretical and methodological frameworks of research on Islamism
  everyday Islamist activism, 72
  ideological articulations of Jamaati Islamism, 74–75
  Islamic state, concept of, 73–74
  jahiliya, concept of, 72
  macro and micro-ideological discourse, 71
  Marxist and postmodern theorizations, 69–70
  opposition to *Hindutva,* 71–72
  Orientalist discourses, 70
  purist worldview, 71
  Western socio-economic models, 70
tolerance, concept of, 256
totalitarianism, 12, 241, 262
Turkish–Islam synthesis, 185–186

ULFA activities in Assam, 146
Umari, Syed Jalaluddin, 66, 134, 145
Umar Tal's movement, 36–37
Ummah, concept of, 19–20, 164–166, 260, 300
un-Islamic other, 260
universalism of Jamaati Islamism, 153–158

Voll, John O., 41

Wafd Party, 31
Wahabi movement, 36
Washington Consensus, 23, 189, 210
Weber, Max, 90
Weiner, Myron, 44
Welfare Party of India (WPI), 153, 157, 165
Western characterizations of Islam, 47–48, 50, 52
Western cultural globalization, 1, 19, 82, 148, 152-153, 162, 165, 252, 259, 267, 269-271
Western ideological and developmental paradigms, 13–14
Westernization, 16–17
Westernized secular-nationalism, 29
Western politico-ideological epistemology, 19
Westoxication (Gharbzadegi), 51
Westphalian system of nation–states, 17
women's question within Islamist discourses
  adoption of veil, 79–80
  education and employment of women, 76
  family planning, role of women, 76
  patriarchal nature of Islam, 76
  Qur'anic precepts on the position of women, 76
  vs consumerist model of feminity, 81
  vs Jamaat-e-Islami's blanket adoption of the Shari'ah, 77–78
  women's political and legal rights, 76
  women's reservation bill, 154
  women's subordination in Muslim societies, 80
World Trade Organization (WTO), 23, 126, 278

Zia, Begum Khaleda, 171, 178, 220, 222, 234, 301, 303
Zia-ur-Rahman, General, 171, 176, 213, 215
Žižek, Slavoj, 2, 236, 259, 262–263
Zuhaira, K. K., 153, 294

About the Author

Maidul Islam teaches in the Department of Political Science at Presidency University, Kolkata. Previously, he was Assistant Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Tuljapur campus) and was a Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. As a Clarendon-Hector Pilling-Senior Hulme scholar at Brasenose College, he studied political theory for his doctoral studies in the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford.